

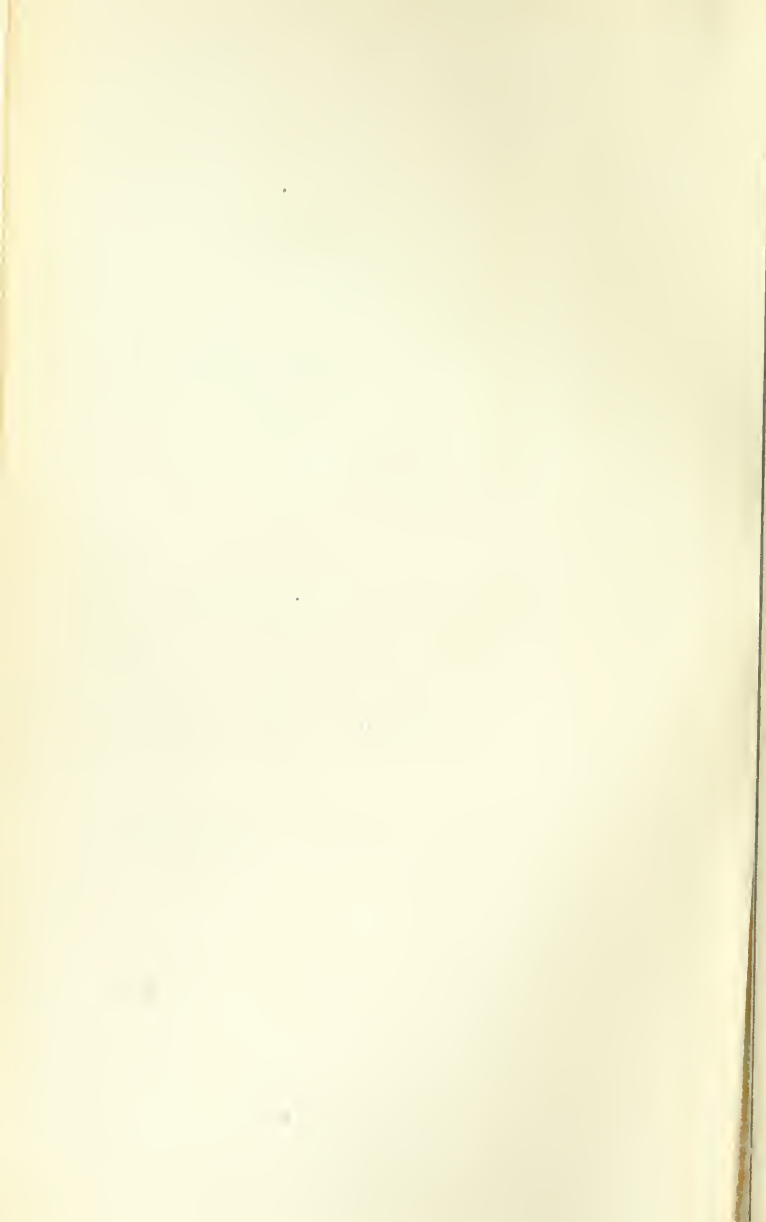


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THE MISSISSIPPI PILOT,

By MARK TWAIN.

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THE

MISSISSIPPI PILOT

BY

MARK TWAIN.

TWO MEN OF SANDY BAR

AND

POEMS

BY

BRET HARTE.

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BY MARK TWAIN.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages contain a very humorous account of the life of a Mississippi Pilot. Amid his varied experiences, MR. CLEMENS, the writer of this book, appears to have studied piloting; and if our information be correct, he assumed his *nom de plume*, MARK TWAIN, from the sounding line in use on the river, the cry "mark twain" being the depth indicated, as mentioned at page 31. But the pilot's life, as described by Mark Twain, is not merely a record of adventure. It is full of information; and, under the thick veil of quaintness and American drollery, there lies much practical knowledge and information. The difficulties of the Mississippi Pilot are no fiction, and while Mark Twain carries us along with him in easy flowing narrative, we are constantly reminded of the danger of the channel and the skill of the pilot himself. And although "MARK TWAIN" does not shrink from some forcible word-painting in his book, there is nothing to offend even the fastidious reader in the pages now offered for his perusal.

transpired, the day was a dead and empty thing. Not only the boys, but the whole village, felt this. After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then: the white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; the streets empty, or pretty nearly so; one or two clerks sitting in front of the Water Street stores, with their splint-bottomed chairs tilted back against the wall, chins on breasts, hats slouched over their faces, asleep—with shingle-shavings enough around to show what broke them down; a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the sidewalk, doing a good business in water-melon rinds and seeds; two or three lonely little freight piles scattered about the "levee;" a pile of "skids" on the slope of the stone-paved wharf, and the fragrant town drunkard asleep in the shadow of them; two or three wood flats at the head of the wharf, but nobody to listen to the peaceful lapping of the wavelets against them; the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun; the dense forest away on the other side; the "point" above the town, and the "point" below, bounding the river-glimpse and turning it into a sort of sea, and withal a very still and brilliant and lonely one. Presently a film of dark smoke appears above one of those remote "points;" instantly a negro drayman, famous for his quick eye and prodigious

voice, lifts up the cry, "S-t-e-a-m-boat a-coming!" and the scene changes! The town drunkard stirs, the clerks wake up, a furious clatter of drays follows, every house and store pours out a human contribution, and all in a twinkling the dead town is alive and moving. Drays, carts, men, boys, all go hurrying from many quarters to a common centre, the wharf. Assembled there, the people fasten their eyes upon the coming boat as upon a wonder they are seeing for the first time. And the boat is rather a handsome sight, too. She is long and sharp, and trim and pretty; she has two tall, fancy-topped chimneys, with a gilded device of some kind swung between them; a fanciful pilot-house, all glass and "gingerbread," perched on the top of the "texas" deck behind them; the paddle-boxes are gorgeous with a picture or with gilded rays above the boat's name; the boiler deck, the hurricane deck, and the texas deck are fenced and ornamented with clean white railings; there is a flag gallantly flying from the jack-staff; the furnace doors are open and the fires glaring bravely; the upper decks are black with passengers; the captain stands by the big bell, calm, imposing, the envy of all; great volumes of the blackest smoke are rolling and tumbling out of the chimneys—a husbanded grandeur created with a bit of pitch pine just before arriving at a town; the crew are grouped on the forecastle: the broad stage is run

far out over the port bow, and an envied deck-hand stands picturesquely on the end of it with a coil of rope in his hand ; the pent steam is screaming through the gauge-cocks ; the captain lifts his hand, a bell rings, the wheels stop ; then they turn back, churning the water to foam, and the steamer is at rest. Then such a scramble as there is to get aboard, and to get ashore, and to take in freight and to discharge freight, all at one and the same time ; and such a yelling and cursing as the mates facilitate it all with ! Ten minutes later the steamer is under way again, with no flag on the jack-staff and no black smoke issuing from the chimneys. After ten more minutes the town is dead again, and the town drunkard asleep by the skids once more.

My father was a justice of the peace, and I supposed he possessed the power of life and death over all men and could hang anybody that offended him. This was distinction enough for me as a general thing ; but the desire to be a steamboatman kept intruding, nevertheless. I first wanted to be a cabin-boy, so that I could come out with a white apron on and shake a table-cloth over the side, where all my old comrades could see me ; later I thought I would rather be the deck-hand who stood on the end of the stage-plank with the coil of rope in his hand, because he was particularly conspicuous. But these were only day-dreams—they were too heavenly to be contem-

plated as real possibilities. By and by one of our boys went away. He was not heard of for a long time. At last he turned up as apprentice engineer or "striker" on a steamboat. This thing shook the bottom out of all my Sunday-school teachings. That boy had been notoriously worldly, and I just the reverse; yet he was exalted to this eminence, and I left in obscurity and misery. There was nothing generous about this fellow in his greatness. He would always manage to have a rusty bolt to scrub while his boat tarried at our town, and he would sit on the inside guard and scrub it, where we could all see him and envy him and loathe him. And whenever his boat was laid up he would come home and swell around the town in his blackest and greasiest clothes, so that nobody could help remembering that he was a steamboatman; and he used all sorts of steamboat technicalities in his talk, as if he were so used to them that he forgot common people could not understand them. He would speak of the "labboard" side of a horse in an easy, natural way that would make one wish he was dead. And he was always talking about "St. Looy" like an old citizen; he would refer casually to occasions when he "was coming down Fourth Street," or when he was "passing by the Planter's House," or when there was a fire and he took a turn on the brakes of "the old Big Missouri;" and then he would go on and lie about how many

towns the size of ours were burned down there that day. Two or three of the boys had long been persons of consideration among us because they had been to St. Louis once and had a vague general knowledge of its wonders, but the day of their glory was over now. They lapsed into a humble silence, and learned to disappear when the ruthless "cub"-engineer approached. This fellow had money, too, and hair oil. Also an ignorant silver watch and a showy brass watch chain. He wore a leather belt and used no suspenders. If ever a youth was cordially admired and hated by his comrades, this one was. No girl could withstand his charms. He "cut out" every boy in the village. When his boat blew up at last, it diffused a tranquil contentment among us such as we had not known for months. But when he came home the next week, alive, renowned, and appeared in church all battered up and bandaged, a shining hero, stared at and wondered over by everybody, it seemed to us that the partiality of Providence for an undeserving reptile had reached a point where it was open to criticism.

This creature's career could produce but one result, and it speedily followed. Boy after boy managed to get on the river. The minister's son became an engineer. The doctor's and the postmaster's sons became "mud clerks;" the wholesale liquor dealer's son became a bar-keeper on a boat; four sons of the chief merchant, and two sons of the county judge, became

pilots. Pilot was the grandest position of all. The pilot, even in those days of trivial wages, had a princely salary—from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and no board to pay. Two months of his wages would pay a preacher's salary for a year. Now some of us were left disconsolate. We could not get on the river—at least our parents would not let us.

So by and by I ran away. I said I never would come home again till I was a pilot and could come in glory. But somehow I could not manage it. I went meekly aboard a few of the boats that lay packed together like sardines at the long St. Louis wharf, and very humbly inquired for the pilots, but got only a cold shoulder and short words from mates and clerks. I had to make the best of this sort of treatment for the time being, but I had comforting day-dreams of a future when I should be a great and honoured pilot, with plenty of money, and could kill some of these mates and clerks and pay for them.

Months afterward the hope within me struggled to a reluctant death, and I found myself without an ambition. But I was ashamed to go home. I was in Cincinnati, and I set to work to map out a new career. I had been reading about the recent exploration of the river Amazon by an expedition sent out by our government. It was said that the expedition, owing

to difficulties, had not thoroughly explored a part of the country lying about the head-waters, some four thousand miles from the mouth of the river. It was only about fifteen hundred miles from Cincinnati to New Orleans, where I could doubtless get a ship. I had thirty dollars left; I would go and complete the exploration of the Amazon. This was all the thought I gave to the subject. I never was great in matters of detail. I packed my valise, and took passage on an ancient tub called the "Paul Jones," for New Orleans. For the sum of sixteen dollars I had the scarred and tarnished splendours of "her" main saloon principally to myself, for she was not a creature to attract the eye of wiser travellers.

When we presently got under way and went poking down the broad Ohio, I became a new being, and the subject of my own admiration. I was a traveller! A word never had tasted so good in my mouth before. I had an exultant sense of being bound for mysterious lands and distant climes which I never have felt in so uplifting a degree since. I was in such a glorified condition that all ignoble feelings departed out of me, and I was able to look down and pity the untravelled with a compassion that had hardly a trace of contempt in it. Still, when we stopped at villages and wood-yards, I could not help lolling carelessly upon the railings of the boiler deck to enjoy the envy of the country boys on the bank. If they did not

seem to discover me, I presently sneezed to attract their attention, or moved to a position where they could not help seeing me. And as soon as I knew they saw me I gaped and stretched, and gave other signs of being mightily bored with travelling.

I kept my hat off all the time, and stayed where the wind and the sun could strike me, because I wanted to get the bronzed and weather-beaten look of an old traveller. Before the second day was half gone, I experienced a joy which filled me with the purest gratitude; for I saw that the skin had begun to blister and peel off my face and neck. I wished that the boys and girls at home could see me now.

We reached Louisville in time—at least the neighbourhood of it. We stuck hard and fast on the rocks in the middle of the river and lay there four days. I was now beginning to feel a strong sense of being a part of the boat's family, a sort of infant son to the captain and younger brother to the officers. There is no estimating the pride I took in this grandeur, or the affection that began to swell and grow in me for those people. I could not know how the lordly steamboatman scorns that sort of presumption in a mere landsman. I particularly longed to acquire the least trifle of notice from the big stormy mate, and I was on the alert for an opportunity to do him a service to that end. It came at last. The riotous pow-wow of setting a spar was going on down on the

forecastle, and I went down there and stood around in the way—or mostly skipping out of it—till the mate suddenly roared a general order for somebody to bring him a capstan bar. I sprang to his side and said: "Tell me where it is—I'll fetch it!"

If a rag-picker had offered to do a diplomatic service for the Emperor of Russia, the monarch could not have been more astounded than the mate was. He even stopped swearing. He stood and stared down at me. It took him ten seconds to scrape his disjointed remains together again. Then he said impressively: "Well, if this don't beat hell!" and turned to his work with the air of a man who had been confronted with a problem too abstruse for solution.

I crept away, and courted solitude for the rest of the day. I did not go to dinner; I stayed away from supper until everybody else had finished. I did not feel so much like a member of the boat's family now as before. However, my spirits returned, in instalments, as we pursued our way down the river. I was sorry I hated the mate so, because it was not in (young) human nature not to admire him. He was huge and muscular, his face was bearded and whiskered all over; he had a red woman and a blue woman tattooed on his right arm—one on each side of a blue anchor with a red rope to it; and in the matter of profanity he was perfect. When he was getting out cargo at a landing, I was always where I could

see and hear. He felt all the sublimity of his great position, and made the world feel it, too. When he gave even the simplest order, he discharged it like a blast of lightning, and sent a long, reverberating peal of profanity thundering after it. I could not help contrasting the way in which the average landsman would give an order, with the mate's way of doing it. If the landsman should wish the gang-plank moved a foot farther forward, he would probably say: "James or William, one of you push that plank forward, please;" but put the mate in his place, and he would roar out: "Here, now, start that gang-plank for'ard! Lively, now! *What're* you about! Snatch it! *snatch* it! There! there! Aft again! aft again! Don't you hear me? Dash it to dash! are you going to *sleep* over it! 'Vast heaving. 'Vast heaving, I tell you! Going to heave it clear astern? WHERE're you going with that barrel! *for'ard* with it 'fore I make you swallow it, you dash-dash-dash-*dashed* split between a tired mud-turtle and a crippled hearse-horse!"

I wished I could talk like that.

When the soreness of my adventure with the mate had somewhat worn off, I begun timidly to make up to the humblest official connected with the boat—the night watchman. He snubbed my advances at first, but I presently ventured to offer him a new chalk pipe, and that softened him. So he allowed me to sit with him by the big bell on the hurricane

deck, and in time he melted into conversation. He could not well have helped it, I hung with such homage on his words and so plainly showed that I felt honoured by his notice. He told me the names of dim capes and shadowy islands as we glided by them in the solemnity of the night, under the winking stars, and by and by got to talking about himself. He seemed over-sentimental for a man whose salary was six dollars a week—or rather he might have seemed so to an older person than I. But I drank in his words hungrily, and with a faith that might have moved mountains if it had been applied judiciously. What was it to me that he was soiled and seedy and fragrant with gin? What was it to me that his grammar was bad, his construction worse, and his profanity so void of art that it was an element of weakness rather than strength in his conversation? He was a wronged man, a man who had seen trouble, and that was enough for me. As he mellowed into his plaintive history his tears dripped upon the lantern in his lap, and I cried, too, from sympathy. He said he was the son of an English nobleman—either an earl or an alderman, he could not remember which, but believed he was both; his father, the nobleman, loved him, but his mother hated him from the cradle; and so while he was still a little boy he was sent to “one of them old, ancient colleges”—he could not remember which; and by and by his father died and

his mother seized the property and "shook" him, as he phrased it. After his mother shook him, members of the nobility with whom he was acquainted used their influence to get him the position of "lob-lolly boy in a ship;" and from that point my watchman threw off all the trammels of date and locality and branched out into a narrative that bristled all along with incredible adventures; a narrative that was so reeking with bloodshed and so crammed with hair-breadth escapes and the most engaging and unconscious personal villanies, that I sat speechless, enjoying, shuddering, wondering, worshipping.

It was a sore blight to find out afterwards that he was a low, vulgar, ignorant, sentimental, half-witted humbug, an untravelled native of the wilds of Illinois, who had absorbed wildeat literature and appropriated its marvels, until in time he had woven odds and ends of the mess into this yarn, and then gone on telling it to fledgelings like me, until he had come to believe it himself.





II

A "CUB" PILOT'S EXPERIENCE ; OR, LEARNING THE RIVER.

WHAT with lying on the rocks four days at Louisville, and some other delays, the poor old "Paul Jones" fooled away about two weeks in making the voyage from Cincinnati to New Orleans. This gave me a chance to get acquainted with one of the pilots, and he taught me how to steer the boat, and thus made the fascination of river life more potent than ever for me.

It also gave me a chance to get acquainted with a youth who had taken deck passage—more's the pity; for he easily borrowed six dollars of me on a promise to return to the boat and pay it back to me the day after we should arrive. But he probably died or forgot, for he never came. It was doubtless the former, since he had said his parents were wealthy, and he only travelled deck passage because it was cooler. *

I soon discovered two things. One was that a vessel would not be likely to sail for the mouth of

* "Deck" passage—*i.e.*, steerage passage.

the Amazon under ten or twelve years; and the other was that the nine or ten dollars still left in my pocket would not suffice for so imposing an exploration as I had planned, even if I could afford to wait for a ship. Therefore it followed that I must contrive a new career. The "Paul Jones" was now bound for St. Louis. I planned a siege against my pilot, and at the end of three hard days he surrendered. He agreed to teach me the Mississippi River from New Orleans to St. Louis for five hundred dollars, payable out of the first wages I should receive after graduating. I entered upon the small enterprise of "learning" twelve or thirteen hundred miles of the great Mississippi River with the easy confidence of my time of life. If I had really known what I was about to require of my faculties, I should not have had the courage to begin. I supposed that all a pilot had to do was to keep his boat in the river, and I did not consider that that could be much of a trick, since it was so wide.

The boat backed out from New Orleans at four in the afternoon, and it was "our watch" until eight. Mr. B——, my chief, "straightened her up," ploughed her along past the sterns of the other boats that lay at the Levee, and then said, "Here, take her; shave those steamships as close as you'd peel an apple." I took the wheel, and my heart went down into my boots; for it seemed to me that we were about to

scrape the side off every ship in the line, we were so close. I held my breath, and began to claw the boat away from the danger; and I had my own opinion of the pilot who had known no better than to get us into such peril, but I was too wise to express it. In half a minute I had a wide margin of safety intervening between the "Paul Jones" and the ships; and within ten seconds more I was set aside in disgrace, and Mr. B—— was going into danger again and flaying me alive with abuse of my cowardice. I was stung, but I was obliged to admire the easy confidence with which my chief loafed from side to side of his wheel, and trimmed the ships so closely that disaster seemed ceaselessly imminent. When he had cooled a little he told me that the easy water was close ashore and the current outside, and therefore we must hug the bank, up-stream, to get the benefit of the former, and stay well out, down-stream, to take advantage of the latter. In my own mind I resolved to be a down-stream pilot, and leave the up-streaming to people dead to prudence.

Now and then Mr. B—— called my attention to certain things. Said he, "This is Six-Mile Point." I assented. It was pleasant enough information, but I could not see the bearing of it. I was not conscious that it was a matter of any interest to me. Another time he said, "This is Nine-Mile Point." Later he said, "This is Twelve-Mile Point." They were all

about level with the water's edge; they all looked about alike to me; they were monotonously un-picturesque. I hoped Mr. B—— would change the subject. But no; he would crowd up around a point, hugging the shore with affection, and then say: "The slack water ends here, abreast this bunch of China-trees; now we cross over." So he crossed over. He gave me the wheel once or twice, but I had no luck. I either came near chipping off the edge of a sugar plantation, or else I yawed too far from shore, and so I dropped back into disgrace again and got abused.

The watch was ended at last, and we took supper and went to bed. At midnight the glare of a lantern shone in my eyes, and the night watchman said:—

"Come! turn out!"

And then he left. I could not understand this extraordinary procedure; so I presently gave up trying to, and dozed off to sleep. Pretty soon the watchman was back again, and this time he was gruff. I was annoyed. I said:—

"What do you want to come bothering around here in the middle of the night for? Now as like as not I'll not get to sleep again to-night."

The watchman said:—

"Well, if this an't good, I'm blessed."

The "off-watch" was just turning in, and I heard some brutal laughter from them, and such remarks

as "Hello, watchman! an't the new cub turned out yet? He's delicate, likely. Give him some sugar in a rag and send for the chambermaid to sing rock-a-by-baby to him."

About this time Mr. B—— appeared on the scene. Something like a minute later I was climbing the pilot-house steps with some of my clothes on and the rest in my arms. Mr. B—— was close behind, commenting. Here was something fresh—this thing of getting up in the middle of the night to go to work. It was a detail in piloting that had never occurred to me at all. I knew that boats ran all night, but somehow I had never happened to reflect that somebody had to get up out of a warm bed to run them. I began to fear that piloting was not quite so romantic as I had imagined it was; there was something very real and work-like about this new phase of it.

It was a rather dingy night, although a fair number of stars were out. The big mate was at the wheel, and he had the old tub pointed at a star and was holding her straight up the middle of the river. The shores on either hand were not much more than a mile apart, but they seemed wonderfully far away and ever so vague and indistinct. The mate said:—

"We've got to land at Jones's plantation, sir."

The vengeful spirit in me exulted. I said to myself, I wish you joy of your job, Mr. B——; you'll

have a good time finding Mr. Jones's plantation such a night as this; and I hope you never *will* find it as long as you live.

Mr. B—— said to the mate:—

“Upper end of the plantation, or the lower?”

“Upper.”

“I can't do it. The stumps there are out of water at this stage. It's no great distance to the lower, and you'll have to get along with that.”

“All right, sir. If Jones don't like it he'll have to lump it, I reckon.”

And then the mate left. My exultation began to cool and my wonder to come up. Here was a man who not only proposed to find this plantation on such a night, but to find either end of it you preferred. I dreadfully wanted to ask a question, but I was carrying about as many short answers as my cargo-room would admit of, so I held my peace. All I desired to ask Mr. B—— was the simple question whether he was ass enough to really imagine he was going to find that plantation on a night when all plantations were exactly alike and all the same colour. But I held in. I used to have fine inspirations of prudence in those days.

Mr. B—— made for the shore and soon was scraping it, just the same as if it had been daylight. And not only that, but singing—

“Father in heaven, the day is declining,” etc.

It seemed to me that I had put my life in the keeping of a peculiarly reckless outcast. Presently he turned on me and said :—

“What’s the name of the first point above New Orleans?”

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn’t know.

“Don’t *know*?”

This manner jolted me. I was down at the foot again, in a moment. But I had to say just what I had said before.

“Well, you’re a smart one,” said Mr. B—. “What’s the name of the *next* point?”

Once more I didn’t know.

“Well this beats anything. Tell me the name of *any* point or place I told you.”

I studied a while and decided that I couldn’t.

“Look-a-here! What do you start out from, above Twelve-Mile Point, to cross over?”

“I—I—don’t know.”

“You—you—don’t know?” mimicking my drawling manner of speech. “What *do* you know?”

“I—I—nothing, for certain.”

“By the great Cæsar’s ghost I believe you. You’re the stupidest dunderhead I ever saw or ever heard of, so help me Moses! The idea of *you* being a pilot—*you*! Why, you don’t know enough to pilot a cow down a lane.”

Oh, but his wrath was up! He was a nervous man, and he shuffled from one side of his wheel to the other as if the floor was hot. He would boil a while to himself, and then overflow and scald me again.

“Look-a-here! What do you suppose I told you the names of those points for?”

I tremblingly considered a moment, and then the devil of temptation provoked me to say:—

“Well—to—to—be entertaining, I thought.”

This was a red rag to the bull. He raged and stormed so (he was crossing the river at the time) that I judge it made him blind, because he ran over the steering-oar of a trading-scow. Of course the traders sent up a volley of red-hot profanity. Never was a man so grateful as Mr. B—— was: because he was brim full, and here were subjects who would *talk back*. He threw open a window, thrust his head out, and such an irruption followed as I never had heard before. The fainter and farther away the scowmen's curses drifted, the higher Mr. B—— lifted his voice and the weightier his adjectives grew. When he closed the window he was empty. You could have drawn a scine through his system and not caught curses enough to disturb your mother with. Presently he said to me in the gentlest way:—

“My boy, you must get a little memorandum-book, and every time I tell you a thing, put it down

right away. There's only one way to be a pilot, and that is to get this entire river by heart. You have to know it just like A B C."

That was a dismal revelation to me; for my memory was never loaded with anything but blank cartridges. However, I did not feel discouraged long. I judged that it was best to make some allowances, for doubtless Mr. B—— was "stretching." Presently he pulled a rope and struck a few strokes on the big bell. The stars were all gone, now, and the night was as black as ink. I could hear the wheels churn along the bank, but I was not entirely certain that I could see the shore. The voice of the invisible watchman called up from the hurricane deck :—

"What's this, sir?"

"Jones's plantation."

I said to myself, I wish I might venture to offer a small bet that it isn't. But I did not chirp. I only waited to see. Mr. B—— handled the engine bells, and in due time the boat's nose came to the land, a torch glowed from the forecastle, a man skipped ashore, a darky's voice on the bank said, "Gimme de carpet-bag, Mars' Jones," and the next moment we were standing up the river again, all serene. I reflected deeply a while, and then said,—but not aloud,—Well, the finding of that plantation was the luckiest accident that ever happened; but it couldn't

nappen again in a hundred years. And I fully believed it *was* an accident, too.

By the time we had gone seven or eight hundred miles up the river, I had learned to be a tolerably plucky up-stream steersman, in daylight, and before we reached St. Louis I had made a trifle of progress in night-work, but only a trifle. I had a note-book that fairly bristled with the names of towns, "points," bars, islands, bends, reaches, etc.; but the information was to be found only in the note-book—none of it was in my head. It made my heart ache to think I had only got half of the river set down; for as our watch was four hours off and four hours on, day and night, there was a long four-hour gap in my book for every time I had slept since the voyage began.

My chief was presently hired to go on a big New Orleans boat, and I packed my satchel and went with him. She was a grand affair. When I stood in her pilot-house I was so far above the water that I seemed perched on a mountain; and her decks stretched so far away, fore and aft, below me, that I wondered how I could ever have considered the little "Paul Jones" a large craft. There were other differences, too. The "Paul Jones's" pilot-house was a cheap, dingy, battered rattle-trap, cramped for room: but here was a sumptuous glass temple; room enough to have a dance in; showy red and gold window-curtains; an imposing sofa; leather cushions

and a back to the high bench where visiting pilots sit, to spin yarns and "look at the river;" bright, fanciful "cuspadores," instead of a broad wooden box filled with sawdust; nice new oil-cloth on the floor; a hospitable big stove for winter; a wheel as high as my head, costly with inlaid work; a wire tiller-rope; bright brass knobs for the bells; and a tidy, white-aproned, black "texas-tender," to bring up tarts and ices and coffee during mid-watch, day and night. Now this was "something like;" and so I began to take heart once more to believe that piloting was a romantic sort of occupation after all. The moment we were under way I began to prowl about the great steamer and fill myself with joy. She was as clean and as dainty as a drawing-room; when I looked down her long, gilded saloon, it was like gazing through a splendid tunnel. She had an oil-picture, by some gifted sign-painter, on every state-room door; she glittered with no end of prism-fringed chandeliers; the clerk's office was elegant, the bar was marvellous, and the bar-keeper had been barbered and upholstered at incredible cost. The boiler deck (*i.e.*, the second story of the boat, so to speak) was as spacious as a church, it seemed to me; so with the fore-castle; and there was no pitiful handful of deck-hands, firemen, and roustabouts down there, but a whole battalion of men. The fires were fiercely glaring from a long row of furnaces, and over them

were eight huge boilers! This was unutterable pomp. The mighty engines—but enough of this. I had never felt so fine before. And when I found that the regiment of natty servants respectfully “sir’d” me, my satisfaction was complete.

When I returned to the pilot-house St. Louis was gone and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it: you understand, it was turned around. I had seen it, when coming up-stream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river *both ways*.

The pilot-house was full of pilots, going down to “look at the river.” What is called the “upper river” (the two hundred miles between St. Louis and Cairo, where the Ohio comes in) was low; and the Mississippi changes its channel so constantly that the pilots used to always find it necessary to run down to Cairo to take a fresh look, when their boats were to lie in port a week, that is, when the water was at a low stage. A deal of this “looking at the river” was done by poor fellows who seldom had a berth, and whose only hope of getting one lay in their being always freshly posted and therefore ready to drop into the shoes of some reputable pilot, for a single trip, on account of such pilot’s sudden illness, or some other necessity. And a good many of them constantly

ran up and down inspecting the river, not because they ever really hoped to get a berth, but because (they being guests of the boat) it was cheaper to "look at the river" than stay ashore and pay board. In time these fellows grew dainty in their tastes, and only infested boats that had an established reputation for setting good tables. All visiting pilots were useful, for they were always ready and willing, winter or summer, night or day, to go out in the yawl and help buoy the channel or assist the boat's pilots in any way they could. They were likewise welcome, because all pilots are tireless talkers, when gathered together, and as they talk only about the river, they are always understood and are always interesting. Your true pilot cares nothing about anything on earth but the river, and his pride in his occupation surpasses the pride of kings.

We had a fine company of these river-inspectors along, this trip. There were eight or ten; and there was abundance of room for them in our great pilot-house. Two or three of them wore polished silk hats, elaborate shirt fronts, diamond breastpins, kid gloves, and patent leather boots. They were choice in their English, and bore themselves with a dignity proper to men of solid means and prodigious reputation as pilots. The others were more or less loosely clad, and wore upon their heads tall felt cones that were suggestive of the days of the Commonwealth.

I was a cipher in this august company, and felt subdued, not to say torpid. I was not even of sufficient consequence to assist at the wheel when it was necessary to put the tiller hard down in a hurry; the guest that stood nearest did that when occasion required—and this was pretty much all the time, because of the crookedness of the channel and the scant water. I stood in a corner; and the talk I listened to took the hope all out of me. One visitor said to another:—

“Jim, how did you run Plum Point, coming up?”

“It was in the night, there, and I ran it the way one of the boys on the ‘Diana’ told me; started out about fifty yards above the wood pile on the false point, and held on the cabin under Plum Point till I raised the reef—quarter less twain—then straightened up for the middle bar till I got well abreast the old one-limbed cotton-wood in the bend, then got my stern on the cotton-wood and head on the low place above the point, and came through a-booming—nine and a half.”

“Pretty square crossing, an’t it?”

“Yes, but the upper bar’s working down fast.”

Another pilot spoke up and said:—

“I had better water than that, and ran it lower down; started out from the false point—mark twain—raised the second reef abreast the big snag in the bend, and had quarter less twain”

One of the gorgeous ones remarked: "I don't want to find fault with your leadsmen, but that's a good deal of water for Plum Point, it seems to me."

There was an approving nod all around as this quiet snub dropped on the boaster and "settled" him. And so they went on talk-talk-talking. Meantime, the thing that was running in my mind was, "Now if my ears hear aright, I have not only to get the names of all the towns and islands and bends, and so on, but I must even get up a warm personal acquaintanceship with every old snag and one-limbed cotton-wood and obscure wood pile that ornaments the banks of this river for twelve hundred miles; and more than that, I must actually know where these things are in the dark, unless these guests are gifted with eyes that can pierce through two miles of solid blackness; I wish the piloting business was in Jericho and I had never thought of it."

At dusk Mr. B——tapped the big bell three times (the signal to land), and the captain emerged from his drawing-room in the forward end of the texas, and looked up inquiringly. Mr. B——said:—

"We will lay up here all night, captain."

"Very well, sir."

That was all. The boat came to shore and was tied up for the night. It seemed to me a fine thing that the pilot could do as he pleased without asking so grand a captain's permission. I took my supper

and went immediately to bed, discouraged by my day's observations and experiences. My late voyage's note-booking was but a confusion of meaningless names. It had tangled me all up in a knot every time I had looked at it in the daytime. I now hoped for respite in sleep; but no, it revelled all through my head till sunrise again, a frantic and tireless nightmare.

Next morning I felt pretty rusty and low-spirited. We went booming along, taking a good many chances, for we were anxious to "get out of the river" (as getting out to Cairo was called) before night should overtake us. But Mr. B——'s partner, the other pilot, presently grounded the boat, and we lost so much time getting her off that it was plain the darkness would overtake us a good long way above the mouth. This was a great misfortune, especially to certain of our visiting pilots, whose boats would have to wait for their return, no matter how long that might be. It sobered the pilot-house talk a good deal. Coming up-stream, pilots did not mind low water or any kind of darkness; nothing stopped them but fog. But down-stream work was different; a boat was too nearly helpless, with a stiff current pushing behind her; so it was not customary to run down-stream at night in low water.

There seemed to be one small hope, however: if we could get through the intricate and dangerous

Hat Island crossing before night, we could venture the rest, for we would have plainer sailing and better water. But it would be insanity to attempt Hat Island at night. So there was a deal of looking at watches all the rest of the day, and a constant ciphering upon the speed we were making; Hat Island was the eternal subject; sometimes hope was high and sometimes we were delayed in a bad crossing, and down it went again. For hours all hands lay under the burden of this suppressed excitement; it was even communicated to me, and I got to feeling so solicitous about Hat Island, and under such an awful pressure of responsibility, that I wished I might have five minutes on shore to draw a good, full, relieving breath, and start over again. We were standing no regular watches. Each of our pilots ran such portions of the river as he had run when coming upstream, because of his greater familiarity with it; but both remained in the pilot-house constantly.

An hour before sunset, Mr. B—took the wheel and Mr. W—stepped aside. For the next thirty minutes every man held his watch in his hand and was restless, silent, and uneasy. At last somebody said, with a doomful sigh,

“Well, yonder’s Hat Island—and we can’t make it.”

All the watches closed with a snap, everybody sighed and muttered something about its being “too

bad, too bad—ah, if we could *only* have got here half an hour sooner!” and the place was thick with the atmosphere of disappointment. Some started to go out, but loitered, hearing no bell-tap to land. The sun dipped behind the horizon, the boat went on. Inquiring looks passed from one guest to another; and one who had his hand on the door-knob, and had turned it, waited, then presently took away his hand and let the knob turn back again. We bore steadily down the bend. More looks were exchanged, and nods of surprised admiration—but no words. Insensibly the men drew together behind Mr. B—as the sky darkened and one or two dim stars came out. The dead silence and sense of waiting became oppressive. Mr. B——pulled the cord, and two deep, mellow notes from the big bell floated off on the night. Then a pause, and one more note was struck. The watchman’s voice followed, from the hurricane deck:

“Labboard lead, there! Stabboard lead!”

The cries of the leadsmen began to rise out of the distance, and were gruffly repeated by the word-passers on the hurricane deck.

“M-a-r-k three! M-a-r-k three! Quarter-less-three! Half twain! Quarter twain! M-a-r-k twain! Quarter-less.”

Mr. B——pulled two bell-ropes, and was answered by faint jinglings far below in the engine-room, and our speed slackened. The steam began to whistle

through the gauge-cocks. The cries of the leadsmen went on—and it is a weird sound, always, in the night. Every pilot in the lot was watching, now, with fixed eyes, and talking under his breath. Nobody was calm and easy but Mr. B——. He would put his wheel down and stand on a spoke, and as the steamer swung into her (to me) utterly invisible marks—for we seemed to be in the midst of a wide and gloomy sea—he would meet and fasten her there. Talk was going on, now, in low voices :

“There ; she’s over the first reef all right !”

After a pause, another subdued voice :—

“Her stern’s coming down just *exactly* right, by George ! Now she’s in the marks ; over she goes !”

Somebody else muttered :—

“Oh, it was done beautiful—*beautiful* !”

Now the engines were stopped altogether, and we drifted with the current. Not that I could see the boat drift, for I could not, the stars being all gone by this time. This drifting was the dismallest work ; it held one’s heart still. Presently I discovered a blacker gloom than that which surrounded us. It was the head of the island. We were closing right down upon it. We entered its deeper shadow, and so imminent seemed the peril that I was likely to suffocate ; and I had the strongest impulse to do *something*, anything, to save the vessel. But still Mr. B—— stood by his wheel, silent, intent as a

at, and all the pilots stood shoulder to shoulder at his back.

"She'll not make it!" somebody whispered.

The water grew shoaler and shoaler by the leads-men's cries, till it was down to—

"Eight-and-a-half! E-i-g-h-t feet! E-i-g-h-t feet! Seven-and——"

Mr. B—— said warningly through his speaking tube to the engineer:—

"Stand by, now!"

"Aye-aye, sir."

"Seven-and-a-half! Seven feet! *Six*-and——"

We touched bottom! Instantly Mr. B——set a lot of bells ringing, shouted through the tube, "*Now* let her have it—every ounce you've got;" then to his partner, "Put her hard down! snatch her! snatch her!" The boat rasped and ground her way through the sand, hung upon the apex of disaster a single tremendous instant, and then over she went! And such a shout as went up at Mr. B——'s back never loosened the roof of a pilot-house before!

There was no more trouble after that. Mr. B—— was a hero that night; and it was some little time, too, before his exploit ceased to be talked about by river men.

Fully to realize the marvellous precision required in laying the great steamer in her mark in that murky waste of water, one should know that not only must

she pick her intricate way through snags and blind reefs, and then shave the head of the island so closely as to brush the overhanging foliage with her stern, but at one place she must pass almost within arm's reach of a sunken and invisible wreck that would snatch the hull timbers from under her if she should strike it, and destroy a quarter of a million dollars' worth of steamboat and cargo in five minutes, and maybe a hundred and fifty human lives into the bargain.

The last remark I heard that night was a compliment to Mr. B——, uttered in soliloquy and with unction by one of our guests. He said:

“By the Shadow of Death, but he's a lightning pilot!”





III.

THE CONTINUED PERPLEXITIES OF "CUB" PILOTING.

AT the end of what seemed a tedious while, I had managed to pack my head full of islands, towns, bars, "points," and bends; and a curiously inanimate mass of lumber it was, too. However, inasmuch as I could shut my eyes and reel off a good long string of these names without leaving out more than ten miles of river in every fifty, I began to feel that I could take a boat down to New Orleans if I could make her skip those little gaps. But of course my complacency could hardly get start enough to lift my nose a trifle into the air, before B—— would think of something to fetch it down again. One day he turned on me suddenly with this settler—

"What is the shape of Walnut Bend?"

He might as well have asked me my grandmother's opinion of protoplasm. I reflected respectfully, and then said I didn't know it had any particular shape. My gunpowdery chief went off with a bang, of course, and then went on loading and firing until he was out of adjectives.

I had learned long ago that he only carried just many rounds of ammunition, and was sure to subside into a very placable and even remorseful old smooth-bore as soon as they were all gone. That word "old" is merely affectionate; he was not more than thirty-four. I waited. By and by he said,—

"My boy, you've got to know the *shape* of the river perfectly. It is all there is left to steer by on a very dark night. Everything else is blotted out and gone. But mind you, it hasn't the same shape in the night that it has in the day-time."

"How on earth am I ever going to learn it, then?"

"How do you follow a hall at home in the dark? Because you know the shape of it. You can't see it."

"Do you mean to say that I've got to know all the million trifling variations of shape in the banks of this interminable river as well as I know the shape of the front hall at home?"

"On my honour you've got to know them *better* than any man did know the shapes of the halls in his own house."

"I wish I was dead!"

"Now I don't want to discourage you, but——"

"Well, pile it on me; I might as well have it now as another time."

"You see, this has got to be learned; there isn't any getting around it. A clear starlight night throws such heavy shadows that if you didn't know the

shape of a shore perfectly you would claw away from every bunch of timber, because you would take the black shadow of it for a solid cape ; and you see you would be getting scared to death every fifteen minutes by the watch. You would be fifty yards from shore all the time when you ought to be within twenty feet of it. You can't see a snag in one of those shadows, but you know exactly where it is, and the shape of the river tells you when you are coming to it. Then there's your pitch dark night ; the river is a very different shape on a pitch dark night from what it is on a starlight night. All shores seem to be straight lines, then, and mighty dim ones, too ; and you'd run them for straight lines, only you know better. You boldly drive your boat right into what seems to be a solid, straight wall (you knowing very well that in reality there is a curve there), and that wall falls back and makes way for you. Then there's your gray mist. You take a night when there's one of these grisly, drizzly, gray mists, and then there isn't *any* particular shape to a shore. A gray mist would tangle the head of the oldest man that ever lived. Well, then, different kinds of *moonlight* change the shape of the river in different ways. You see——”

“ Oh, don't say any more, please ! Have I got to learn the shape of the river according to all these five hundred thousand different ways ? If I tried to carry

all that cargo in my head it would make me stoop-shouldered."

"No! you only learn *the* shape of the river; and you learn it with such absolute certainty that you can always steer by the shape that's *in your head*, and never mind the one that's before your eyes."

"Very well, I'll try it; but after I have learnt it can I depend on it? Will it keep the same form and not go fooling around?"

Before Mr. B—— could answer, Mr. W—— came in to take the watch, and he said—

"B——, you'll have to look out for President's Island and all that country clear away up above the Old Hen and Chickens. The banks are caving and the shape of the shores changing like everything. Why, you wouldn't know the point above 40. You can go up inside the old sycamore snag, now." *

So that question was answered. Here were leagues of shore changing shape. My spirits were down in the mud again. Two things seemed pretty apparent to me. One was that in order to be a pilot a man had got to learn more than any one man ought to be allowed to know; and the other was, that he must learn it all over again in a different way every twenty-four hours.

* It may not be necessary, but still it can do no harm to explain that "inside" means between the snag and the shore.—
M. T.

That night we had the watch until twelve. Now it was an ancient river custom for the two pilots to chat a bit when the watch changed. While the relieving pilot put on his gloves and lit his cigar, his partner, the retiring pilot, would say something like this:—

“I judge the upper bar is making down a little at Hale’s Point; had quarter twain with the lower lead and mark twain * with the other.”

“Yes, I thought it was making down a little, last trip. Meet any boats?”

“Met one abreast the head of 21, but she was away over hugging the bar, and I couldn’t make her out entirely. I took her for the ‘Sunny South’—hadn’t any skylights forward of the chimneys.”

And so on. And as the relieving pilot took the wheel his partner † would mention that we were in such-and-such a bend, and say we were abreast of such-and-such a man’s wood-yard or plantation. This was courtesy; I suppose it was *necessity*. But Mr. W—— came on watch full twelve minutes late, on this particular night—a tremendous breach of etiquette; in fact, it is the unpardonable sin among pilots. So Mr. B—— gave him no greeting whatever, but simply surrendered the wheel and marched

* Two fathoms. Quarter twain is $2\frac{1}{4}$ fathoms, $13\frac{1}{4}$ feet. Mark three is three fathoms.

† “Partner” is technical for “the other pilot.”

out of the pilot-house without a word. I was appalled; it was a villanous night for blackness; we were in a particular wide and blind part of the river, where there was no shape or substance to anything, and it seemed incredible that Mr. B—— should have left that poor fellow to kill the boat trying to find out where he was. But I resolved that I would stand by him any way. He should find that he was not wholly friendless. So I stood around, and waited to be asked where we were. But Mr. W—— plunged on serenely through the solid firmament of black cats that stood for an atmosphere, and never opened his mouth. Here is a proud devil, thought I; here is a limb of Satan that would rather send us all to destruction than put himself under obligations to me, because I am not yet one of the salt of the earth and privileged to snub captains and lord it over everything dead and alive in a steamboat. I presently climbed up on the bench; I did not think it was safe to go to sleep while this lunatic was on watch.

However, I must have gone to sleep in the course of time, because the next thing I was aware of was the fact that day was breaking, Mr. W—— gone, and Mr. B—— at the wheel again. So it was four o'clock and all well—but me; I felt like a skinful of dry bones, and all of them trying to ache at once.

Mr. B—— asked me what I had stayed up there for. I confessed that it was to do Mr. W——

benevolence : tell him where he was. It took five minutes for the entire preposterousness of the thing to filter into Mr. B——'s system, and then I judge it filled him nearly up to the chin ; because he paid me a compliment—and not much of a one either. He said :—

“ Well, taking you by-and-large, you do seem to be more different kinds of an ass than any creature I ever saw before. What did you suppose he wanted to know for ? ”

I said I thought it might be a convenience to him.

“ Convenience ! Dash ! Didn't I tell you that a man's got to know the river in the night the same as he'd know his own front hall ? ”

“ Well, I can follow the front hall in the dark if I know it *is* the front hall ; but suppose you set me down in the middle of it in the dark and not tell me which hall it is ; how am *I* to know ? ”

“ Well, you've *got* to, on the river ! ”

“ All right. Then I'm glad I never said anything to Mr. W——.”

“ I should say so. Why, he'd have slammed you through the window and utterly ruined a hundred dollars' worth of window-sash and stuff.”

I was glad this damage had been saved, for it would have made me unpopular with the owners. They always hated anybody who had the name of being careless, and injuring things.

I went to work, now, to learn the shape of the river; and of all the eluding and ungraspable objects that ever I tried to get mind or hands on, that was the chief. I would fasten my eyes upon a sharp, rounded point that projected far into the river some miles ahead of me, and go to laboriously photographing its shape upon my brain; and just as I was beginning to succeed to my satisfaction, we would draw up towards it and the exasperating thing would begin to melt away and fold back into the bank! If there had been a conspicuous dead tree standing upon the very point of the cape, I would find that tree inconspicuously merged into the general forest, and occupying the middle of a straight shore, when I got abreast of it! No prominent hill would stick to its shape long enough for me to make up my mind what its form really was, but it was as dissolving and changeful as if it had been a mountain of butter in the hottest corner of the tropics. Nothing ever had the same shape when I was coming down-stream that it had borne when I went up. I mentioned the little difficulties to Mr. B——. He said—

“That’s the very main virtue of the thing. the shapes didn’t change every three seconds the wouldn’t be of any use. Take this place where we are now, for instance. As long as that hill over yonder is only one hill, I can boom right along the way I’m going; but the moment it splits at the top and

forms a V, I know I've got to scratch to starboard in a hurry, or I'll bang this boat's brains out against a rock; and then the moment one of the prongs of the V swings behind the other, I've got to waltz to larboard again, or I'll have a misunderstanding with a snag that would snatch the keelson out of this steamboat as neatly as if it were a sliver in your hand. If that hill didn't change its shape on bad nights there would be an awful steamboat grave-yard around here inside of a year."

It was plain that I had got to learn the shape of the river in all the different ways that could be thought of—upside down, wrong end first, inside out, fore-and-aft, and "thortships"—and then know what to do on gray nights when it hadn't any shape at all. So I set about it. In the course of time I began to get the best of this knotty lesson, and my self-complacency moved to the front once more. Mr. B—— was all fixed, and ready to start it to the rear again. He opened on me after this fashion—

"How much water did we have in the middle crossing at Hole-in-the-Wall, trip before last?"

I considered this an outrage. I said—

"Every trip, down and up, the leadsmen are singing through that tangled place for three quarters of an hour on a stretch. How do you reckon I can remember such a mess as that?"

"My boy, you've got to remember it. You've

got to remember the exact spot and the exact marks the boat lay in when we had the shoalest water, in every one of the two thousand shoal places between St. Louis and New Orleans ; and you mustn't get the shoal soundings and marks of one trip mixed up with the shoal soundings and marks of another, either, for they're not often twice alike. You must keep them separate."

When I came to myself again, I said—

"When I get so that I can do that, I'll be able to raise the dead, and then I won't have to pilot a steam-boat in order to make a living. I want to retire from this business. I want a slush-bucket and a brush ; I'm only fit for a roustabout. I havn't got brains enough to be a pilot ; and if I had I wouldn't have strength enough to carry them around, unless I went on crutches."

"Now, drop that ! When I say I'll learn * a man the river, I mean it. And you can depend on it I'll learn him or kill him."

There was no use in arguing with a person like this. I promptly put such a strain on my memory that by and by even the shoal water and the countless crossing-marks began to stay with me. But the result was just the same. I never could more than get one knotty thing learned before another presented itself. Now I had often seen pilots gazing at the

* "Teach " is not in the river vocabulary.

water and pretending to read it as if it were a book; but it was a book that told me nothing. A time came at last, however, when Mr. B—— seemed to think me far enough advanced to bear a lesson on water-reading. So he began—

“Do you see that long slanting line on the face of the water? Now that’s a reef. Moreover, it’s a bluff reef. There is a solid sand-bar under it that is nearly as straight up and down as the side of a house. There is plenty of water close up to it, but mighty little on top of it. If you were to hit it you would knock the boat’s brains out. Do you see where the line fringes out at the upper end and begins to fade away?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, that is a low place; that is the head of the reef. You can climb over there, and not hurt anything. Cross over, now, and follow along close under the reef—easy water there—not much current.”

I followed the reef along till I approached the fringed end. Then Mr. B—— said—

“Now get ready. Wait till I give the word. She won’t want to mount the reef; a boat hates shoal water. Stand by—wait—wait—keep her well in hand. *Now* cramp her down! Snatch her; snatch her!”

He seized the other side of the wheel and helped to spin it around until it was hard down, and then we

held it so. The boat resisted and refused to answer for a while, and next she came surging to starboard, mounted the reef, and sent a long, angry ridge of water foaming away from her bows.

“Now watch her; watch her like a cat, or she’ll get away from you. When she fights strong and the tiller slips a little, in a jerky, greasy sort of way, let up on her a trifle; it is the way she tells you at night that the water is too shoal; but keep edging her up, little by little, toward the point. You are well up on the bar, now; there is a bar under every point, because the water that comes down around it forms an eddy and allows the sediment to sink. Do you see those fine lines on the face of the water, that branch out like the ribs of a fan? Well, those are little reefs, you want to just miss the ends of them, but run them pretty close. Now look out—look out! Don’t you crowd that slick, greasy-looking place; there ain’t nine feet there; she won’t stand it. She begins to smell it; look sharp, I tell you! Oh blazes, there you go! Stop the starboard wheel! Quick! Ship up to back! Set her back!”

The engine bells jingled, and the engines answered promptly, shooting white columns of steam far aloft out of the scape pipes, but it was too late. The boat had “smelt” the bar in good earnest; the foamy ridges that radiated from her bows suddenly disappeared, a great dead swell came rolling forward

and swept ahead of her, she careened far over to larboard, and went tearing away toward the other shore as if she were about scared to death. We were a good mile from where we ought to have been, when we finally got the upper hand of her again.

During the afternoon watch the next day, Mr. B—— asked me if I knew how to run the next few miles. I said—

“Go inside the first snag above the point, outside the next one, start out from the lower end of Higgins’s wood-yard, make a square crossing and——”

“That’s all right. I’ll be back before you close up on the next point.”

But he wasn’t. He was still below when I rounded it and entered upon a piece of river which I had some misgivings about. I did not know that he was hiding behind a chimney to see how I would perform. I went gayly along, getting prouder and prouder, for he had never left the boat in my sole charge such a length of time before. I even got to “setting” her and letting the wheel go, entirely, while I vaingloriously turned my back and inspected the stern marks and hummed a tune, a sort of easy indifference, which I had prodigiously admired in B—— and other great pilots. Once I inspected rather long, and when I faced to the front again my heart flew into my mouth so suddenly that if I hadn’t

clapped my teeth together I would have lost it. One of those frightful bluff reefs was stretching its deadly length right across our bows! My head was gone in a moment; I did not know which end I stood on; I gasped and could not get my breath; I spun the wheel down with such rapidity that it wove itself together like a spider's web; the boat answered and turned square away from the reef, but the reef followed her! I fled, and still it followed—still it kept right across my bows! I never looked to see where I was going, I only fled. The awful crash was imminent—why didn't that villain come! If I committed the crime of ringing a bell, I might get thrown overboard. But better that than kill the boat. So in blind desperation I started such a rattling "shivaree" down below as never had astounded an engineer in this world before, I fancy. Amidst the frenzy of the bells the engines began to back and fill in a furious way, and my reason forsook its throne—we were about to crash into the woods on the other side of the river. Just then Mr. B—— stepped calmly into view on the hurricane deck. My soul went out to him in gratitude; my distress vanished; I would have felt safe on the brink of Niagara, with Mr. B—— on the hurricane deck. He blandly and sweetly took his tooth-pick out of his mouth between his fingers, as if it were a cigar,—we were just in the act of climbing an overhanging big tree, and the passen-

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gers were scudding astern like rats,—and lifted up these commands to me ever so gently—

“Stop the starboard. Stop the larboard. Set her back on both.”

The boat hesitated, halted, pressed her nose among the boughs a critical instant, then reluctantly began to back away.

“Stop the larboard. Come ahead on it. Stop the starboard. Come ahead on it. Point her for the bar.”

I sailed away as serenely as a summer's morning. Mr. B——came in and said, with mock simplicity—

“When you have a hail, my boy, you ought to tap the big bell three times before you land, so that the engineers can get ready.”

I blushed under the sarcasm, and said I hadn't had any hail.

“Ah! Then it was for wood, I suppose. The officer of the watch will tell you when he wants to wood up.”

I went on consuming, and said I wasn't after wood.

“Indeed? Why, what could you want over here in the bend, then? Did you ever know of a boat following a bend-up stream at this stage of the river?”

“No, sir,—and I wasn't trying to follow it. I was getting away from a bluff reef.”

“No, it wasn't a bluff reef; there isn't one within three miles of where you were.”

"But I saw it. It was as bluff as that one yonder."

"Just about. Run over it!"

"Do you give it as an order?"

"Yes. Run over it."

"If I don't, I wish I may die."

"All right, I am taking the responsibility."

I was just as anxious to kill the boat, now, as I had been to save her before. I impressed my orders upon my memory, to be used at the inquest, and made a straight break for the reef. As it disappeared under our bows I held my breath; but we slid over it like oil.

"Now don't you see the difference? It wasn't anything but a wind reef. The wind does that."

"So I see. But it is exactly like a bluff reef. How am I ever going to tell them apart?"

"I can't tell you. It is an instinct. By and by you will just naturally *know* one from the other, but you never will be able to explain why or how you know them apart."

It turned out to be true. The face of the water, in time, became a wonderful book—a book that was a dead language to the uneducated passenger, but which told me its mind without reserve, delivering its most cherished secrets as clearly as if it uttered them with a voice. And it was not a book to be read once and thrown aside, for it had a new story to tell

every day. Throughout the long twelve hundred miles there was never a page that was void of interest, never one that you could leave unread without loss, never one that you would want to skip, thinking you could find higher enjoyment in some other thing. There never was so wonderful a book written by man ; never one whose interest was so absorbing, so unflagging, so sparkingly renewed with every re-perusal. The passenger who could not read it was charmed with a peculiar sort of faint dimple on its surface (on the rare occasions when he did not overlook it altogether) ; but to the pilot that was an *italicized* passage ; indeed, it was more than that, it was a legend of the largest capitals with a string of shouting exclamation points at the end of it ; for it meant that a wreck or a rock was buried there that could tear the life out of the strongest vessel that ever floated. It is the faintest and simplest expression the water ever makes, and the most hideous to a pilot's eye. In truth, the passenger who could not read this book saw nothing but all manner of pretty pictures in it, painted by the sun and shaded by the clouds, whereas to the trained eye these were not pictures at all, but the grimmest and most dead-earnest of reading matter.

Now when I had mastered the language of this water and had come to know every trifling feature that bordered the great river as familiarly as I knew the letters of the alphabet, I had made a valuable ac-

quisition. But I had lost something, too. I had lost something which could never be restored to me while I lived. All the grace, the beauty, the poetry had gone out of the majestic river ! I still keep in mind a certain wonderful sunset which I witnessed when steamboating was new to me. A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood ; in the middle distance the red hue brightened into gold, through which a solitary log came floating, black and conspicuous ; in one place a long, slanting mark lay sparkling upon the water ; in another the surface was broken by boiling, tumbling rings, that were as many-tinted as an opal ; where the ruddy flush was faintest, was a smooth spot, that was covered with graceful circles and radiating lines, ever so delicately traced ; the shore on our left was densely wooded, and the sombre shadow that fell from this forest was broken in one place by a long, ruffled trail that shone like silver ; and high above the forest wall a clean-stemmed dead tree waved a single leafy bough that glowed like a flame in the unobstructed splendour that was flowing from the sun. There were graceful curves, reflected images, woody heights, soft distances ; and over the whole scene, far and near, the dissolving lights drifted steadily, enriching it, every passing moment, with new marvels of colouring.

I stood like one bewitched. I drank it in, in a speechless rapture. The world was new to me, and

I had never seen anything like this at home. But as I have said, a day came when I began to cease noting the glories and the charms which the moon and the sun and the twilight wrought upon the river's face; another day came when I ceased altogether to note them. Then, if that sunset scene had been repeated, I would have looked upon it without rapture, and would have commented upon it, inwardly, after this fashion: This sun means that we are going to have wind to-morrow; that floating log means that the river is rising, small thanks to it; that slanting mark on the water refers to a bluff reef which is going to kill somebody's steamboat one of these nights, if it keeps on stretching out like that; those tumbling "boils" show a dissolving bar and a changing channel there; the lines and circles in the slick water over yonder are a warning that that execrable place is shoaling up dangerously; that silver streak in the shadow of the forest is the "break" from a new snag, and he has located himself in the very best place he could have found to fish for steamboats; that tall, dead tree, with a single living branch, is not going to last long, and then how is a body ever going to get through this blind place at night without the friendly old landmark?

No, the romance and the beauty were all gone from the river. All the value any feature of it ever had for me now was the amount of usefulness it could

furnish toward compassing the safe piloting of a steamboat. Since those days, I have pitied doctors from my heart. What does the lovely flush in a beauty's cheek mean to the doctor but a "break" that ripples above some deadly disease? Are not all her visible charms sown thick with what are to him the signs and symbols of hidden decay? Does he ever see her beauty at all, or doesn't he simply view her professionally, and comment upon her unwholesome condition all to himself? And doesn't he sometimes wonder whether he has gained most or lost most by learning his trade?





IV.

THE "CUB" PILOT'S EDUCATION NEARLY COMPLETED

WHOSOEVER has done me the courtesy to read my chapters which have preceded this may possibly wonder that I deal so minutely with piloting as a science. It was the prime purpose of these articles; and I am not quite done yet. I wish to show, in the most patient and painstaking way, what a wonderful science it is. Ship channels are buoyed and lighted, and therefore it is a comparatively easy undertaking to learn to run them; clear-water rivers, with gravel bottoms, change their channels very gradually, and therefore one needs to learn them but once; but piloting becomes another matter when you apply it to vast streams like the Mississippi and the Missouri, whose alluvial banks cave and change constantly, whose snags are always hunting up new quarters, whose sand-bars are never at rest, whose channels are for ever dodging and shirking, and whose obstructions must be confronted in all nights and all weathers without the aid of a single lighthouse or a single

buoy; for there is neither light nor buoy to be found anywhere in all this three or four thousand miles of villanous river. I feel justified in enlarging upon this great science for the reason that I feel sure no one has ever yet written a paragraph about it who had piloted a steamboat himself, and so had a practical knowledge of the subject. If the theme were hackneyed, I should be obliged to deal gently with the reader; but since it is wholly new, I have felt at liberty to take up a considerable degree of room with it.

When I had learned the name and position of every visible feature of the river; when I had so mastered its shape that I could shut my eyes and trace it from St. Louis to New Orleans; when I had learned to read the face of the water as one would cull the news from the morning paper; and finally, when I had trained my dull memory to treasure up an endless array of soundings and crossing-marks, and keep fast hold of them, I judged that my education was complete: so I got to tilting my cap to the side of my head, and wearing a tooth-pick in my mouth at the wheel. Mr. B—— had his eye on these airs. One day he said—

“What is the height of that bank yonder, at Burgess’s?”

“How can I tell, sir? It is three-quarters of a mile away.”

“Very poor eye—very poor. Take the glass.”

I took the glass, and presently said—

“I can’t tell. I suppose that that bank is about a foot and a half high.”

“Foot and a half! That’s a six-foot bank. How high was the bank along here last trip?”

“I don’t know; I never noticed.”

“You didn’t? Well, you must always do that hereafter.”

“Why?”

“Because you’ll have to know a good many things that it tells you. For one thing, it tells you the stage of the river—tells you whether there’s more water or less in the river along here than there was last trip.”

“The leads tell me that.” I rather thought I had the advantage of him there.

“Yes, but suppose the leads lie? The bank would tell you so, and then you’d stir those leads-men up a bit. There was a ten-foot bank here last trip, and there is only a six-foot bank now. What does that signify?”

“That the river is four feet higher than it was last trip.”

“Very good. Is the river rising or falling?”

“Rising.”

“No it an’t.”

“I guess I am right, sir. Yonder is some drift-wood floating down the stream.”

"A rise *starts* the drift-wood, but then it keeps on floating a while after the river is done rising. Now the bank will tell you about this. Wait till you come to a place where it shelves a little. Now here; do you see this narrow belt of fine sediment? That was deposited while the water was higher. You see the drift-wood begins to strand, too. The bank helps in other ways. Do you see that stump on the false point?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Well, the water is just up to the roots of it. You must make a note of that."

"Why?"

"Because that means that there's seven feet in the chute of 103."

"But 103 is a long way up the river yet."

"That's where the benefit of the bank comes in. There is water enough in 103 *now*, yet there may not be by the time we get there; but the bank will keep us posted all along. You don't run close chutes on a falling river, up-stream, and there are precious few of them that you are allowed to run at all down-stream. There's a law of the United States against it. The river may be rising by the time we get to 103, and in that case we'll run it. We are drawing—how much?"

"Six feet aft,—six and a half forward."

"Well, you do seem to know something."

"But what I particularly want to know is, if I

have got to keep up an everlasting measuring of the banks of this river, twelve hundred miles, month in and month out?"

"Of course!"

My emotions were too deep for words for a while. Presently I said—

"And how about these chutes? Are there many of them?"

"I should say so. I fancy we shan't run any of the river this trip as you've ever seen it run before—so to speak. If the river begins to rise again, we'll go up behind bars that you've always seen standing out of the river, high and dry like the roof of a house; we'll cut across low places that you've never noticed at all, right through the middle of bars that cover fifty acres of river; we'll creep through cracks where you've always thought was solid land; we'll dart through the woods and leave twenty-five miles of river off to one side; we'll see the hind-side of every island between New Orleans and Cairo."

"Then I've got to go to work and learn just as much more river as I already know."

"Just about twice as much more, as near as you can come at it."

"Well, one lives to find out. I think I was a fool when I went into this business."

"Yes, that is true. And you are yet. But you'll not be when you've learned it."

"Ah, I never can learn it."

"I will see that you *do*."

By and by I ventured again—

"Have I got to learn all this thing just as I know the rest of the river—shapes and all—and so I can run it at night?"

"Yes. And you've got to have good fair marks from one end of the river to the other, that will help the bank tell you when there is water enough in each of these countless places,—like that stump, you know. When the river first begins to rise, you can run half a dozen of the deepest of them; when it rises a foot more you can run another dozen; the next foot will add a couple of dozen, and so on: so you see you have to know your banks and marks to a dead moral certainty, and never get them mixed; for when you start through one of those cracks, there's no backing out again, as there is in the big river; you've got to go through, or stay there six months if you get caught on a falling river. There are about fifty of these cracks which you can't run at all except when the river is brim full and over the banks."

"This new lesson is a cheerful prospect."

"Cheerful enough. And mind what I've just told you; when you start into one of those places you've got to go through. They are too narrow to turn around in, too crooked to back out of, and the shoal water is always *up at the head*; never elsewhere.

And the head of them is always likely to be filling up, little by little, so that the marks you reckon on their depth by, this season, may not answer for next."

"Learn a new set, then, every year?"

"Exactly. Cramp her up to the bar! What are you standing up through the middle of the river for?"

The next few months showed me strange things. On the same day that we held the conversation above narrated, we met a great rise coming down the river. The whole vast face of the stream was black with drifting dead logs, broken boughs, and great trees that had caved in and been washed away. It required the nicest steering to pick one's way through this rushing raft, even in the day-time, when crossing from point to point; and at night the difficulty was mightily increased; every now and then a huge log, lying deep in the water, would suddenly appear right under our bows, coming head-on; no use to try to avoid it then; we could only stop the engines, and one wheel would walk over that log from one end to the other, keeping up a thundering racket and careening the boat in a way that was very uncomfortable to passengers. Now and then we would hit one of these sunken logs a rattling bang, dead in the centre, with a full head of steam, and it would stun the boat as if she had hit a continent. Sometimes this log would lodge and stay right across our nose, and back the Mississippi up before it; we

would have to do a little crawl-fishing, then, to get away from the obstruction. We often hit *white* logs, in the dark, for we could not see them till we were right on them; but a black log is a pretty distinct object at night. A white snag is an ugly customer when the daylight is gone.

Of course, on the great rise, down came a swarm of prodigious timber-rafts from the head waters of the Mississippi, coal barges from Pittsburgh, little trading scows from everywhere, and broadhorns from "Posey County," Indiana, freighted with "fruit and furniture"—the usual term for describing it, though in plain English the freight thus aggrandized was hoop-poles and pumpkins. Pilots bore a mortal hatred to these craft; and it was returned with usury. The law required all such helpless traders to keep a light burning, but it was a law that was often broken. All of a sudden, on a murky night, a light would hop up, right under our bows, almost, and an agonized voice, with the backwoods "whang" to it, would wail out:—

"Whar'n the —— you goin' to! Can't you see nothin', you dash-dashed aig-suckin', sheep-stealin', one-eyed son of a stuffed monkey!"

Then for an instant, as we whistled by, the red glare from our furnaces would reveal the scow and the form of the gesticulating orator as if under a lightning-flash, and in that instant our firemen and

deck-hands would send and receive a tempest of missiles of profanity, one of our wheels would walk off with the crashing fragments of a steering-oar, and down the dead blackness would shut again. And that flatboatman would be sure to go into New Orleans and sue our boat, swearing stoutly that he had a light burning all the time, when in truth his gang had the light down below to sing and lie and drink and gamble by, and no watch on deck. Once, at night, in one of those forest-bordered crevices (behind an island) which steamboatmen intensely describe with the phrase "as dark as the inside of a cow," we should have eaten up a Posey County family, fruit, furniture, and all, but that they happened to be fiddling down below, and we just caught the sound of the music in time to sheer off, doing no serious damage, unfortunately, but coming so near it that we had good hopes for a moment. These people brought up their lantern, then, of course; and as we backed and filled to get away, the precious family stood in the light of it—both sexes and various ages—and cursed us till everything turned blue. Once a coal-boatman sent a bullet through our pilot-house when we borrowed a steering-oar of him, in a very narrow place.

During this big rise these small-fry craft were an intolerable nuisance. We were running chute after chute,—a new world to me,—and if there was a par-

ticularly cramped place in a chute, we would be pretty sure to meet a broad-horn there; and if he failed to be there we would find him in a still worse locality, namely, the head of the chute, on the shoal water. And then there would be no end of profane cordialities exchanged.

Sometimes, in the big river, when we would be feeling our way cautiously along through a fog, the deep hush would be suddenly broken by yells and a clamour of tin pans, and all in an instant a log raft would appear vaguely through the webby veil, close upon us; and then we did not wait to swap knives, but snatched our engine bells out by the roots and piled on all the steam we had, to scramble out of the way! One doesn't hit a rock or a solid log raft with a steamboat when he can get excused.

You will hardly believe it, but many steamboat clerks always carried a large assortment of religious tracts with them in those old departed steamboating days. Indeed they did. Twenty times a day we would be cramping up around a bar, while a string of these small-fry rascals were drifting down into the head of the bend away above and beyond us a couple of miles. Now a skiff would dart away from one of them and come fighting its laborious way across the desert of water. It would "ease all," in the shadow of our forecastle, and the panting oarsmen would shout "Gimme a pa-a-per!" as the skiff drifted

swiftly astern. The clerk would throw over a file of New Orleans journals. If these were picked up *without comment* you might notice that now a dozen other skiffs had been drifting down upon us without saying anything. You understand, they had been waiting to see how No. 1 was going to fare. No. 1 making no comment, all the rest would bend to their oars, and come on, now ; and as fast as they came the clerk would heave over neat bundles of religious tracts tied to shingles. The amount of hard swearing which twelve packages of religious literature will command when impartially divided up among twelve raftsmen's crews, who have pulled a heavy skiff two miles on a hot day to get them, is simply incredible.

As I have said, the big rise brought a new world under my vision. By the time the river was over its banks we had forsaken our old paths and were hourly climbing over bars that had stood ten feet out of water before ; we were shaving stumpy shores, like that at the foot of Madrid Bend, which I had always seen avoided before ; we were clattering through chutes like that of 82, where the opening at the foot was an unbroken wall of timber till our nose was almost at the very spot. Some of these chutes were utter solitudes. The dense, untouched forest overhung both banks of the crooked little crack, and one could believe that human creatures had never intruded there before, The swinging grape-vines,

the grassy nooks and vistas glimpsed as we swept by, the flowering creepers waving their red blossoms from the tops of dead trunks, and all the spendthrift richness of the forest foliage, were wasted and thrown away there. The chutes were lovely places to steer in; they were deep, except at the head; the current was gentle; under the "points" the water was absolutely dead, and the invisible banks so bluff that where the tender willow thickets projected you could bury your boat's broadside in them as you tore along, and then you seemed fairly to fly.

Behind other islands we found wretched little farms, and wretcheder little log-cabins; there were crazy rail fences sticking a foot or two above the water, with one or two jean-clad, chills-racked, yellow-faced male-miserables rooting on the top-rails, elbows on knees, jaws in hands, grinding tobacco and discharging the result at floating chips through crevices left by lost milk-teeth; while the rest of the family and the few farm animals were huddled together in an empty wood-flat riding at her moorings close at hand. In this flatboat the family would have to cook and eat and sleep for a lesser or greater number of days (or possibly weeks), until the river should fall two or three feet, and let them get back to their log-cabin and their chills again—chills being a merciful provision of an all-wise Providence to enable them to take exercise without exertion.

And this sort of watery camping out was a thing which these people were rather liable to be treated to a couple of times a year: by the December rise out of the Ohio, and the June rise out of the Mississippi. And yet these were kindly dispensations, for they at least enabled the poor things to rise from the dead now and then, and look upon life when a steamboat went by. They appreciated the blessing, too, for they spread their mouths and eyes wide open and made the most of these occasions. Now what *could* these banished creatures find to do to keep from dying of the blues during the low-water season?

Once, in one of these lovely island chutes, we found our course completely bridged by a great fallen tree. This will serve to show how narrow some of the chutes were. The passengers had an hour's recreation in the virgin wilderness, while the boat-hands chopped the bridge away; for there was no such thing as turning back, you comprehend.

From Cairo to Baton Rouge, when the river is over its banks, you have no particular trouble in the night, for the thousand-mile wall of dense forest that guards the two banks all the way is only gapped with a farm or wood-yard opening at intervals, and so you can't "get out of the river" much easier than you could get out of a fenced lane; but from Baton Rouge to New Orleans it is a different matter. The river is more than a mile wide, and very deep—

as much as two hundred feet, in places. Both banks, for a good deal over a hundred miles, are shorn of their timber and bordered by continuous sugar plantations, with only here and there a scattering sapling or row of ornamental China trees. The timber is shorn off clear to the rear of the plantations, from two to four miles. When the first frost threatens to come, the planters snatch off their crops in a hurry. When they have finished grinding the cane, they form the refuse of the stalks (which they call *bagasse*) into great piles and set fire to them, though in other sugar countries the bagasse is used for fuel in the furnaces of the sugar mills. Now the piles of damp bagasse burn slowly, and smoke like Satan's own kitchen.

An embankment ten or fifteen feet high guards both banks of the Mississippi all the way down that lower end of the river, and this embankment is set back from the edge of the shore from ten to perhaps a hundred feet, according to circumstances; say thirty or forty feet, as a general thing. Fill that whole region with an impenetrable gloom of smoke from a hundred miles of burning bagasse piles, when the river is over the banks, and turn a steamboat loose along there at midnight and see how she will feel. And see how you will feel, too! You find yourself away out in the midst of a vague dim sea that is shoreless, that fades out and loses itself in

the murky distances ; for you cannot discern the thin rib of embankment, and you are always imagining you see a straggling tree when you don't. The plantations themselves are transformed by the smoke and look like a part of the sea. All through your watch you are tortured with the exquisite misery of uncertainty. You hope you are keeping in the river, but you do not know. All that you are sure about is that you are likely to be within six feet of the bank *and* destruction, when you think you are a good half mile from shore. And you are sure, also, that if you chance suddenly to fetch up against the embankment and topple your chimneys overboard, you will have the small comfort of knowing that it is about what you were expecting to do. One of the great Vicksburg packets darted out into a sugar plantation one night, at such a time, and had to stay there a week. But there was no novelty about it ; it had often been done before.

I thought I had finished this chapter, but I wish to add a curious thing, while it is in my mind. It is only relevant in that it is connected with piloting. There used to be an excellent pilot on the river, a Mr. X——, who was a somnambulist. It was said that if his mind was troubled about a bad piece of river, he was pretty sure to get up and walk in his sleep and do strange things. He was once fellow-pilot for a trip or two with George E——, on a Great New

Orleans passenger packet. During a considerable part of the first trip George was uneasy, but got over it by and by, as X—— seemed content to stay in his bed when asleep. Late one night the boat was approaching Helena, Arkansas; the water was low, and the crossing above the town in a very blind and tangled condition. X—— had seen the crossing since E—— had, and as the night was particularly drizzly, sullen, and dark, E—— was considering whether he had not better have X—— called to assist in running the place, when the door opened and X—— walked in. Now on very dark nights, light is a deadly enemy to piloting; you are aware that if you stand in a lighted room on such a night you cannot see things in the street to any purpose; but if you put out the lights and stand in the gloom you can make out objects in the street pretty well. So, on very dark nights, pilots do not smoke; they allow no fire in the pilot-house stove if there is a crack which can allow the least ray to escape; they order the furnaces to be curtained with huge tarpaulins and the sky-lights to be closely blinded. Then no light whatever issues from the boat. The undefinable shape that now entered the pilot-house had Mr. X——'s voice. This said—

“Let me take her, Mr. E——; I've seen this place since you have, and it is so crooked that I reckon I can run it myself easier than I could tell you how to do it.”

“It is kind of you, and I swear *I* am willing. I haven’t got another drop of perspiration left in me. I have been spinning around and around the wheel like a squirrel. It is so dark I can’t tell which way she is swinging till she is coming around like a whirlingig.”

So E—— took a seat on the bench, panting and breathless. The black phantom assumed the wheel without saying anything, steadied the waltzing steamer with a turn or two, and then stood at ease, coaxing her a little to this side and then to that, as gently and as sweetly as if the time had been noon-day. When E—— observed this marvel of steering, he wished he had not confessed! He stared, and wondered, and finally said—

“Well, I thought I knew how to steer a steam-boat, but that was another mistake of mine.”

X—— said nothing, but went serenely on with his work. He rang for the leads; he rang to slow down the steam; he worked the boat carefully and neatly into invisible marks, then stood at the centre of the wheel and peered blandly out into the blackness, fore and aft, to verify his position; as the leads shoaled more and more, he stopped the engines entirely, and the dead silence and suspense of “drifting” followed; when the shoalest water was struck, he cracked on the steam, carried her handsomely over, and then began to work her warily into the next system of shoal

marks ; the same patient, heedful use of leads and engines followed, the boat slipped through without touching bottom, and entered upon the third and last intricacy of the crossing ; imperceptibly she moved through the gloom, crept by inches into her marks, drifted tediously till the shoalest water was cried, and then, under a tremendous head of steam, went swinging over the reef and away into deep water and safety !

E—— let his long-pent breath pour out in a great, relieving sigh, and said—

“That’s the sweetest piece of piloting that was ever done on the Mississippi River ! I wouldn’t believed it could be done, if I hadn’t seen it.”

There was no reply, and he added :

“Just hold her five minutes longer, partner, and let me run down and get a cup of coffee.”

A minute later E—— was biting into a pie, down in the “texas,” and comforting himself with coffee. Just then the night watchman happened in, and was about to happen out again, when he noticed E—— and exclaimed—

“Who is at the wheel, sir ? ”

“X.”

“Dart for the pilot-house, quicker than lightning ! ”

The next moment both men were flying up the pilot-house companion-way, three steps at a jump !

Nobody there! The great steamer was whistling down the middle of the river at her own sweet will! The watchman shot out of the place again; E—— seized the wheel, set an engine back with power, and held his breath while the boat reluctantly swung away from a "towhead" which she was about to knock into the middle of the Gulf of Mexico!

By and by the watchman came back and said,—

"Didn't that lunatic tell you he was asleep, when he first came up here?"

"No."

"Well, he was. I found him walking along on top of the railings, just as unconcerned as another man would walk a pavement; and I put him to bed; now just this minute there he was again, away astern, going through that sort of tight-rope deviltry the same as before."

"Well, I think I'll stay by, next time he has one of those fits. But I hope he'll have them often. You just ought to have seen him take this boat through Helena crossing. I never saw anything so gaudy before. And if he can do such gold-leaf, kid-glove, diamond-breastpin piloting when he is sound asleep, what *couldn't* he do if he was dead!"



V.

“SOUNDING” FACULTIES PECULIARLY NECESSARY TO A PILOT.

WHEN the river is very low, and one's steamboat is “drawing all the water” there is in the channel—or a few inches more, as was often the case in the old times—one must be painfully circumspect in his piloting. We used to have to “sound” a number of particularly bad places almost every trip when the river was at a very low stage.

Sounding is done in this way. The boat ties up at the shore, just above the shoal crossing; the pilot not on watch takes his “cub” or steersman and a picked crew of men (sometimes an officer also), and goes out in the yawl—provided the boat has not that rare and sumptuous luxury, a regularly-devised “sounding-boat”—and proceeds to hunt for the best water, the pilot on duty watching his movements through a spy-glass, meantime, and in some instances assisting by signals of the boat's whistle, signifying “try higher up” or “try lower down;” for the surface of the water, like an oil-painting, is more expres-

sive and intelligible when inspected from a little distance than very close at hand. The whistle signals are seldom necessary, however; never, perhaps, except when the wind confuses the significant ripples upon the water's surface. When the yawl has reached the shoal place, the speed is slackened, the pilot begins to sound the depth with a pole ten or twelve feet long, and the steersman at the tiller obeys the order to "hold her up to starboard;" or "let her fall off to larboard;"* or "steady—steady as you go."

When the measurements indicate that the yawl is approaching the shoalest part of the reef, the command is given to "ease all!" Then the men stop rowing and the yawl drifts with the current. The next order is, "Stand by with the buoy!" The moment the shoalest point is reached, the pilot delivers the order, "Let go the buoy!" and over she goes. If the pilot is not satisfied, he sounds the place again; if he finds better water higher up or lower down, he removes the buoy to that place. Being finally satisfied, he gives the order, and all the men stand their oars straight up in the air, in line; a blast from the boat's whistle indicates that the signal has been seen; then the men "give way" on their oars and lay the yawl alongside the buoy; the steamer comes creeping carefully down, is pointed straight at the buoy,

* The term "larboard" is never used at sea, now, to signify the left hand; but was always used on the river in my time.

husbands her power for the coming struggle, and presently, at the critical moment, turns on all her steam and goes grinding and wallowing over the buoy and the sand, and gains the deep water beyond. Or maybe she doesn't; maybe she "strikes and swings." Then she has to while away several hours (or days) sparring herself off.

Sometimes a buoy is not laid at all, but the yawl goes ahead, hunting the best water, and the steamer follows along in its wake. Often there is a deal of fun and excitement about sounding, especially if it is a glorious summer day, or a blustering night. But in winter the cold and the peril take most of the fun out of it.

A buoy is nothing but a board four or five feet long, with one end turned up; it is a reversed boot-jack. It is anchored on the shoalest part of the reef by a rope with a heavy stone made fast to the end of it. But for the resistance of the turned-up end, the current would pull the buoy under water. At night a paper lantern with a candle in it is fastened on top of the buoy, and this can be seen a mile or more, a little glimmering spark in the waste of blackness.

Nothing delights a cub so much as an opportunity to go out sounding. There is such an air of adventure about it; often there is danger; it is so gaudy and man-of-war-like to sit up in the stern-sheets and steer a swift yawl; there is something fine about the

exultant spring of the boat when an experienced old sailor crew throw their souls into the oars ; it is lovely to see the white foam stream away from the bows ; there is music in the rush of the water ; it is deliciously exhilarating, in summer, to go speeding over the breezy expanses of the river when the world of wavelets is dancing in the sun. It is such grandeur, too, to the cub, to get a chance to give an order ; for often the pilot will simply say, " Let her go about ! " and leave the rest to the cub, who instantly cries, in his sternest tone of command, " Ease starboard ! Strong on the larboard ! Starboard give way ! With a will, men ! " The cub enjoys sounding for the further reason that the eyes of the passengers are watching all the yawl's movements with absorbing interest, if the time be daylight ; and if it be night he knows that those same wondering eyes are fastened upon the yawl's lantern as it glides out into the gloom and fades away in the remote distance.

One trip a pretty girl of sixteen spent her time in our pilot-house with her uncle and aunt, every day and all day long. I fell in love with her. So did Mr. T——'s cub, Tom G——. Tom and I had been bosom friends until this time ; but now a coolness began to arise. I told the girl a good many of my river adventures, and made myself out a good deal of a hero ; Tom tried to make himself appear to be a hero, too, and succeeded to some extent, but then he

always had a way of embroidering. However, virtue is its own reward, so I was a barely perceptible trifle ahead in the contest. About this time something happened which promised handsomely for me: the pilots decided to sound the crossing at the head of 21. This would occur about nine or ten o'clock at night, when the passengers would be still up; it would be Mr. T——'s watch, therefore my chief would have to do the sounding. We had a perfect love of a sounding boat—long, trim, graceful, and as fleet as a greyhound; her thwarts were cushioned; she carried twelve oarsmen; one of the mates was always sent in her to transmit orders to her crew, for ours was a steamer where no end of "style" was put on.

We tied up at the shore above 21, and got ready. It was a foul night, and the river was so wide, there, that a landsman's uneducated eyes could discern no opposite shore through such a gloom. The passengers were alert and interested; everything was satisfactory. As I hurried through the engine-room, picturesquely gotten up in storm toggery, I met Tom, and could not forbear delivering myself of a mean speech:—

"Ain't you glad *you* don't have to go out sounding?"

Tom was passing on, but he quickly turned, and said—

"Now just for that, you can go and get the

sounding-pole yourself. I was going after it, but I'd see you in Halifax, now, before I'd do it."

"Who wants you to get it? I don't. It's in the sounding-boat."

"It ain't, either. It's been new-painted; and it's been up on the lady's-cabin guards two days, drying."

I flew back, and shortly arrived among the crowd of watching and wondering ladies just in time to hear the command:—

"Give way, men!"

I looked over, and there was the gallant sounding-boat booming away, the unprincipled Tom presiding at the tiller, and my chief sitting by him with the sounding-pole which I had been sent on a fool's errand to fetch. Then that young girl said to me,—

"Oh, how awful to have to go out in that little boat on such a night! Do you think there is any danger?"

I would rather have been stabbed. I went off, full of venom, to help in the pilot-house. By and by the boat's lantern disappeared, and after an interval a wee spark glimmered upon the face of the water a mile away. Mr. T—— blew the whistle, in acknowledgment, backed the steamer out, and made for it. We flew along for a while, then slackened steam and went cautiously gliding toward the spark. Presently Mr. T. exclaimed—

"Hello, the buoy-lantern's out!"

He stopped the engines. A moment or two later he said—

“Why, there it is again!”

So he came ahead on the engines once more, and rang for the leads. Gradually the water shoaled up, and then began to deepen again! Mr. T—— muttered—

“Well, I don’t understand this. I believe that buoy has drifted off the reef. Seems to be a little too far to the left. No matter, it is safest to run over it, anyhow.”

So, in that solid world of darkness, we went creeping down on the light. Just as our bows were in the act of ploughing over it, Mr. T—— seized the bell-ropes, rang a startling peal, and exclaimed—

“My soul, it’s the sounding boat!”

A sudden chorus of wild alarms burst out far below—a pause—and then a sound of grinding and crashing forward. Mr. T—— exclaimed—

“There! the paddle-wheel has ground the sounding-boat to lucifer matches! Run! See who is killed!”

I was on the main deck in the twinkling of an eye. My chief and the third mate and nearly all the men were safe. They had discovered their danger when it was too late to pull out of the way; then, when the great guards overshadowed them a moment later, they were prepared and knew what to do; at

my chief's orders they sprang at the right instant, seized the guard, and were hauled aboard. The next moment the sounding-yawl swept aft to the wheel and was struck and splintered to atoms. Two of the men, and the cub Tom, were missing—a fact which spread like wild-fire over the boat. The passengers came flocking to the forward gangway, ladies and all, anxious-eyed, white-faced, and talking in awed voices of the dreadful thing. And often and again I heard them say, “Poor fellows! poor boy, poor boy!”

By this time the boat's yawl was manned and away, to search for the missing. Now a faint call was heard, off to the left. The yawl had disappeared in the other direction. Half the people rushed to one side to encourage the swimmer with their shouts; the other half rushed the other way to shriek to the yawl to turn about. By the callings, the swimmer was approaching, but some said the sound showed failing strength. The crowd massed themselves against the boiler-deck railings, leaning over and staring into the gloom; and every faint and fainter cry wrung from them such words as, “Ah, poor fellow, poor fellow! is there *no* way to save him?”

But still the cries held out, and drew nearer, and presently the voice said pluckily—

“I can make it! Stand by with a rope!”

What a rousing cheer they gave him! The chief mate took his stand in the glare of a torch-basket, a

coil of rope in his hand, and his men grouped about him. The next moment the swimmer's face appeared in the circle of light, and in another one the owner of it was hauled aboard, limp and drenched, while cheer on cheer went up. It was that devil Tom.

The yawl crew searched everywhere, but found no sign of the two men. They probably failed to catch the guard, tumbled back, and were struck by the wheel and killed. Tom had never jumped for the guard at all, but had plunged head-first into the river and dived under the wheel. It was nothing; I could have done it easy enough, and I said so; but everybody went on just the same, making a wonderful to-do over that ass, as if he had done something great. That girl couldn't seem to have enough of that pitiful "hero" the rest of the trip; but little I cared; I loathed her, any way.

The way we came to mistake the sounding-boat's lantern for the buoy-light was this. My chief said that after laying the buoy he fell away and watched it till it seemed to be secure; then he took up a position a hundred yards below it and a little to one side of the steamer's course, headed the sounding-boat up-stream, and waited. Having to wait some time, he and the officer got to talking; he looked up when he judged that the steamer was about on the reef; saw that the buoy was gone, but supposed that the steamer had already run over it; he went on with his

talk; he noticed that the steamer was getting very close down on him, but that was the correct thing; it was her business to shave him closely, for convenience in taking him aboard; he was expecting her to sheer off, until the last moment; then it flashed upon him that she was trying to run him down, mistaking his lantern for the buoy-light; so he sang out, "Stand by to spring for the guard, men!" and the next instant the jump was made.

But I am wandering from what I was intending to do—that is, make plainer than perhaps appears in my previous chapters, some of the peculiar requirements of the science of piloting. First of all, there is one faculty which a pilot must incessantly cultivate until he has brought it to absolute perfection. Nothing short of perfection will do. That faculty is memory. He cannot stop with merely thinking a thing is so and so; he must *know* it; for this is eminently one of the "exact" sciences. With what scorn a pilot was looked upon, in the old times, if he ever ventured to deal in that feeble phrase "I think," instead of the vigorous one "I know!" One cannot easily realize what a tremendous thing it is to know every trivial detail of twelve hundred miles of river, and know it with absolute exactness. If you will take the longest street in New York, and travel up and down it, conning its features patiently until you know every house and window and door and lamp-

post, and big and little sign by heart, and know them so accurately that you can instantly name the one you are abreast of when you are set down at random in that street in the middle of an inky black night, you will then have a tolerable notion of the amount and the exactness of a pilot's knowledge who carries the Mississippi River in his head. And then if you will go on until you know every street crossing, the character, size, and position of the crossing-stones, and the varying depth of mud in each of those numberless places, you will have some idea of what the pilot must know in order to keep a Mississippi steamer out of trouble. Next, if you will take half of the signs in that long street, and *change their places* once a month, and still manage to know their new positions accurately on dark nights, and keep up with these repeated changes without making any mistakes, you will understand what is required of a pilot's peerless memory by the fickle Mississippi.

I think a pilot's memory is about the most wonderful thing in the world. To know the Old and New Testaments by heart, and be able to recite them glibly, forward or backward, or begin at random anywhere in the book and recite both ways and never trip or make a mistake, is no extravagant mass of knowledge, and no marvellous facility compared to a pilot's massed knowledge of the Mississippi, and his marvellous facility in the handling of

it. I make this comparison deliberately, and believe I am not expanding the truth when I do it. Many will think my figure too strong, but pilots will not.

And how easily and comfortably the pilot's memory does its work; how placidly effortless is its way! how *unconsciously* it lays up its vast stores, hour by hour, day by day, and never loses or mislays a single valuable package of them all! Take an instance. Let a leadsman cry, "Half twain! half twain! half twain! half twain! half twain!" until it becomes as monotonous as the ticking of a clock; let conversation be going on all the time, and the pilot be doing his share of the talking, and no longer listening to the leadsman; and in the midst of this endless string of half twains let a single "quarter twain!" be interjected without emphasis, and then the half twain cry go on again, just as before: two or three weeks later that pilot can describe with precision the boat's position in the river when that quarter twain was uttered, and give you such a lot of head-marks, stern-marks, and side-marks to guide you, that you ought to be able to take the boat there and put her in that same spot again yourself! The cry of quarter twain did not really take his mind from his talk, but his trained faculties instantly photographed the bearings, noted the change of depth, and laid up the important details for future reference

without requiring any assistance from *him* in the matter. If you were walking and talking with a friend, and another friend at your side kept up a monotonous repetition of the vowel sound A, for a couple of blocks, and then in the midst interjected an R, and thus, A, A, A, A, A, R, A, A, A, etc., and gave the R, no emphasis, you would not be able to state, two or three weeks afterwards, that the R had been put in, nor be able to tell what objects you were passing at the moment it was done. But you could if your memory had been patiently and laboriously trained to do that sort of thing mechanically.

Give a man a tolerably fair memory to start with, and piloting will develop it into a very colossus of capability. But *only in the matters it is daily drilled in*. A time would come when the man's faculties could not help noticing landmarks and soundings, and his memory could not help holding on to them with the grip of a vice; but if you asked that same man at noon what he had had for breakfast, it would be ten chances to one that he could not tell you. Astonishing things can be done with the human memory if you will devote it faithfully to one particular line of business.

At the time that wages soared so high on the Missouri River, my chief, Mr. B——, went up there, and learned more than a thousand miles of that

stream with an ease and rapidity that were astonishing. When he had seen each division *once* in the daytime and *once* at night, his education was so nearly complete that he took out a "daylight" license; a few trips later he took out a full license, and went to piloting day and night—and he ranked A 1, too.

Mr. B—— placed me as steersman for a while under a pilot whose feats of memory were a constant marvel to me. However, his memory was born in him, I think, not built. For instance, somebody would mention a name. Instantly Mr. J—— would break in—

"Oh, I knew *him*, sallow-faced, red-headed fellow, with a little scar on the side of his throat like a splinter under the flesh. He was only in the Southern trade six months. That was thirteen years ago. I made a trip with him. There was five feet in the upper river then, the 'Henry Blake' grounded at the foot of Tower Island, drawing four and a half; the 'George Elliott' unshipped her rudder on the wreck of the 'Sunflower.'"

"Why the 'Sunflower' didn't sink until——"

"I know when she sunk; it was three years before that, on the 2nd of December; Asa Hardy was captain of her, and his brother John was first clerk; and it was his first trip in her, too; Tom Jones told me these things a week afterward in New Orleans; he was first mate of the 'Sunflower.'"

Captain Hardy stuck a nail in his foot the 6th of July of the next year, and died of the lockjaw on the 15th. His brother John died two years after—3rd of March—erysipelas. I never saw either of the Hardy's—they were Alleghany River men; but people who knew them told me all these things. And they said Captain Hardy wore yarn socks winter and summer jast the same, and his first wife's name was Jane Shook—she was from New England—and his second one died in a lunatic asylum. It was in the blood. She was from Lexington, Kentucky. Name was Horton before she was married."

And so on, by the hour, the man's tongue would go. He could *not* forget anything. It was simply impossible. The most trivial details remained as distinct and luminous in his head, after they had lain there for years, as the most memorable events. His was not simply a pilot's memory; its grasp was universal. If he were talking about a trifling letter he had received seven years before, he was pretty sure to deliver you the entire screed from memory. And then, without observing that he was departing from the true line of his talk, he was more than likely to hurl in a long-drawn parenthetical biography of the writer of that letter; and you were lucky indeed if he did not take up that writer's relatives, one by one, and give you their biographies, too.

Such a memory as that is a great misfortune. To

it, all occurrences are of the same size. Its possessor cannot distinguish an interesting circumstance from an uninteresting one. As a talker, he is bound to clog his narrative with tiresome details and make himself an insufferable bore. Moreover, he cannot stick to his subject. He picks up every little grain of memory he discerns in his way, and so is led aside. Mr. J—— would start out with the honest intention of telling you a vastly funny anecdote about a dog. He would be “so full of laugh” that he could hardly begin. Then his memory would start with the dog’s breed and personal appearance; drift into a history of his owner; of his owner’s family, with descriptions of weddings and burials that had occurred in it, together with recitals of congratulatory verses and obituary poetry provoked by the same; then this memory would recollect that one of these events occurred during the celebrated “hard winter” of such and such a year, and a minute description of that winter would follow, along with the names of people who were frozen to death, and statistics showing the high figures which pork and hay went up to. Pork and hay would suggest corn and fodder; corn and fodder would suggest cows and horses; the latter would suggest the circus and certain celebrated bare-back riders; the transition from the circus to the menagerie was easy and natural; from the elephant to equatorial Africa was but a

step; then of course the heathen savages would suggest religion; and at the end of three or four hours' tedious jaw the watch would change and J—— would go out of the pilot-house muttering extracts from sermons he had heard years before about the efficacy of prayer as a means of grace. And the original first mention would be all you had learned about that dog, after all this waiting and hungering.

A pilot must have a memory; but there are two higher qualities which he must also have. He must have good and quick judgment and decision, and a cool, calm courage that no peril can shake. Give a man the merest trifle of pluck to start with, and by the time he has become a pilot he cannot be unmanned by any danger a steamboat can get into; but one cannot quite say the same for judgment. Judgment is a matter of brains, and a man must *start* with a good stock of that article or he will never succeed as a pilot.

The growth of courage in the pilot-house is steady all the time, but it does not reach a high and satisfactory condition until some time after the young pilot has been "standing his own watch," alone and under the staggering weight of all the responsibilities connected with the position. When an apprentice has become pretty thoroughly acquainted with the river, he goes clattering along so fearlessly with his steamboat, night or day, that he presently begins to

imagine that it is *his* courage that animates him; but the first time the pilot steps out and leaves him to his own devices he finds out it was the other man's. He discovers that the article has been left out of his own cargo altogether. The whole river is bristling with exigencies in a moment; he is not prepared for them; he does not know how to meet them; all his knowledge forsakes him; and within fifteen minutes he is as white as a sheet and scared almost to death. Therefore pilots wisely train these cubs by various strategic tricks to look danger in the face a little more calmly. A favourite way of theirs is to play a friendly swindle upon the candidate.

Mr. B—— served me in this fashion once, and for years afterwards I used to blush even in my sleep when I thought of it. I had become a good steersman; so good, indeed, that I had all the work to do on our watch, night and day; Mr. B—— seldom made a suggestion to me; all he ever did was to take the wheel on particularly bad nights or in particularly bad crossings, land the boat when she needed to be landed, play gentleman of leisure nine-tenths of the watch, and collect the wages. The lower river was about bank-full, and if anybody had questioned my ability to run any crossing between Cairo and New Orleans without help or instruction, I should have felt irreparably hurt. The idea of being afraid of any crossing in the lot, in the *day-time*, was a thing too

preposterous for contemplation. Well, one matchless summer's day I was bowling down the bend above island 66, brim full of self-conceit, and carrying my nose as high as a giraffe's, when Mr. B—— said—

“I am going below awhile. I suppose you know the next crossing?”

This was almost an affront. It was about the plainest and simplest crossing in the whole river. One couldn't come to any harm, whether he ran it right or not; and as for depth, there never had been any bottom there. I knew all this, perfectly well.

“Know how to *run* it? Why, I can run it with my eyes shut.”

“How much water is there in it?”

“Well, that is an odd question. I couldn't get bottom there with a church steeple.”

“You think so, do you?”

The very tone of the question shook my confidence. That was what Mr. B—— was expecting. He left, without saying anything more. I began to imagine all sorts of things. Mr. B——, unknown to me, of course, sent somebody down to the fore-castle with some mysterious instructions to the leadsmen, another messenger was sent to whisper among the officers, and then Mr. B—— went into hiding behind a smoke-stack where he could observe results. Presently the captain stepped out on the hurricane deck; next the chief mate appeared; then a clerk. Every

moment or two a straggler was added to my audience ; and before I got to the head of the island I had fifteen or twenty people assembled down there under my nose. I began to wonder what the trouble was. As I started across, the captain glanced aloft at me and said, with sham uneasiness in his voice—

“Where is Mr. B——?”

“Gone below, sir.”

But that did the business for me. My imagination begun to construct dangers out of nothing, and they multiplied faster than I could keep the run of them. All at once I imagined I saw shoal water ahead! The wave of coward agony that surged through me then came near dislocating every joint in me. All my confidence in that crossing vanished. I seized the bell-rope ; dropped it, ashamed ; seized it again ; dropped it once more ; clutched it tremblingly once again, and pulled it so feebly that I could hardly hear the stroke myself. Captain and man sang out instantly, and both together—

“Starboard lead there ! and quick about it ! ”

This was another shock. I began to climb the wheel like a squirrel ; but I would hardly get the boat started to port before I would see new dangers on that side, and away I would spin, to the other ; only to find perils accumulating to starboard, and be crazy to get to port again. Then came the leadsman's sepulchral cry—

“D-e-e-p four!”

Deep four in a bottomless crossing! The terror of it took my breath away.

“M-a-r-k three; M-a-r-k three! Quarter less three! Half twain!”

This was frightful! I seized the bell-ropes and stopped the engines.

“Quarter twain! Quarter twain! *Mark* twain!”

I was helpless. I did not know what in the world to do. I was quaking from head to foot, and I could have hung my hat on my eyes, they stuck out so far.

“Quarter *less* twain! Nine and a *half*!”

We were *drawing* nine! My hands were in a nerveless flutter. I could not ring a bell intelligibly with them. I flew to the speaking-tube and shouted to the engineer—

“Oh, Ben, if you love me, *back* her! Quick Ben! Oh, back the immortal *soul* out of her!”

I heard the door close gently. I looked round, and there stood Mr. B——, smiling a bland, sweet smile. Then the audience on the hurricane deck sent up a shout of humiliating laughter. I saw it all, now, and I felt meaner than the meanest man in human history. I laid in the lead, set the boat in her marks, came ahead on the engines and said—

“It was a fine trick to play on an orphan, *wasn't* it? I suppose I'll never hear the last of how I was ass enough to heave the lead at the head of 66.”

" Well, no, you won't, maybe. In fact I hope you won't; for I want you to learn something by that experience. Didn't you *know* there was no bottom in that crossing? "

" Yes, sir, I did."

" Very well, then. You shouldn't have allowed me or anybody else to shake your confidence in that knowledge. Try to remember that. And another thing: when you get into a dangerous place, don't turn coward. That isn't going to help matters any."

It was a good enough lesson, but pretty hardly learned. Yet about the hardest part of it was that for months I so often had to hear a phrase which I had conceived a particular distaste for. It was, " Oh, Ben if you love me, back her! "





VI.

OFFICIAL RANK AND DIGNITY OF A PILOT. THE RISE AND DECADENCE OF THE PILOTS' ASSOCIATION.

IN my preceding chapters I have tried, by going into the minutiae of the science of piloting, to carry the reader step by step to a comprehension of what the science consists of; and at the same time I have tried to show him that it is a very curious and wonderful science, too, and very worthy of his attention. If I have seemed to love my subject, it is no surprising thing, for I loved the profession far better than any I have followed since, and I took a measureless pride in it. The reason is plain: a pilot, in those days, was the only unfettered and entirely independent human being that lived in the earth. Kings are but the hampered servants of parliament and people; parliaments sit in chains forged by their constituency; the editor of a newspaper cannot be independent, but must work with one hand tied behind him by party and patrons, and be content to utter only half or two-thirds of his mind; no clergyman is a free man and may speak the whole truth,

regardless of his parish's opinions : writers of all kinds are manacled servants of the public. We write frankly and fearlessly, but then we "modify" before we print. In truth, every man and woman and child has a master, and worries and frets in servitude ; but in the day I write of, the Mississippi pilot had *none*. The captain could stand upon the hurricane deck, in the pomp of a very brief authority, and give him five or six orders, while the vessel backed into the stream, and then that skipper's reign was over. The moment that the boat was under way, in the river, she was under the sole and unquestioned control of the pilot. He could do with her exactly as he pleased, run her when and whither he chose, and tie her up to the bank whenever his judgment said that that course was best. His movements were entirely free ; he consulted no one, he received commands from nobody, he promptly resented even the merest suggestions. Indeed, the law of the United States forbade him to listen to commands or suggestions, rightly considering that the pilot necessarily knew better how to handle the boat than anybody could tell him. So here was the novelty of a king without a keeper, an absolute monarch who was absolute in sober truth and not by a fiction of words. I have seen a boy of eighteen taking a great steamer serenely into what seemed almost certain destruction, and the aged captain standing mutely by, filled with

apprehension but powerless to interfere. His interference, in that particular instance, might have been an excellent thing, but to permit it would have been to establish a most pernicious precedent. It will easily be guessed, considering the pilot's boundless authority, that he was a great personage in the old steamboating days. He was treated with marked courtesy by the captain and with marked deference by all the officers and servants ; and this deferential spirit was quickly communicated to the passengers, too. I think pilots were about the only people I ever knew who failed to show, in some degree, embarrassment in the presence of travelling foreign princes. But then, people in one's own grade of life are not usually embarrassing objects.

By long habit, pilots came to put all their wishes in the form of commands. It "gravels" me, to this day, to put my will in the weak shape of a request, instead of launching it in the crisp language of an order.

In those old days, to load a steamboat at St. Louis, take her to New Orleans and back, and discharge cargo, consumed about twenty-five days, on an average. Seven or eight of these days the boat spent at the wharves of St. Louis and New Orleans, and every soul on board was hard at work, except the two pilots ; *they* did nothing but play gentleman, up town, and receive the same wages for it as if they had

been on duty. The moment the boat touched the wharf at either city, they were ashore; and they were not likely to be seen again till the last bell was ringing and everything in readiness for another voyage.

When a captain got hold of a pilot of particularly high reputation, he took pains to keep him. When wages were four hundred dollars a month on the Upper Mississippi, I have known a captain to keep such a pilot in idleness, under full pay, three months at a time, while the river was frozen up. And one must remember that in those cheap times four hundred dollars was a salary of almost inconceivable splendour. Few men on shore got such pay as that, and when they did they were mightily looked up to. When pilots from either end of the river wandered into our small Missouri village, they were sought by the best and the fairest, and treated with exalted respect. Lying in port under wages was a thing which many pilots greatly enjoyed and appreciated; especially if they belonged in the Missouri River in the heyday of that trade (Kansas times), and got nine hundred dollars a trip, which was equivalent to about eighteen hundred dollars a month. Here is a conversation of that day. A chap out of the Illinois River, with a little stern-wheel tub, accosts a couple of ornate and gilded Missouri River pilots—

“Gentlemen, I’ve got a pretty good trip for the

up-country, and shall want you about a month. How much will it be ? ”

“Eighteen hundred dollars apiece.”

“Heavens and earth ! You take my boat, let me have your wages, and I’ll divide ! ”

I will remark, in passing, that Mississippi steam-boatmen were important in landmen’s eyes (and in their own, too, in a degree) according to the dignity of the boat they were on. For instance, it was a proud thing to be of the crew of such stately craft as the “Alcck Scott” or the “Grand Turk.” Negro firemen, deck hands, and barbers belonging to those boats were distinguished personages in their grade of life, and they were well aware of that fact, too. A stalwart darkey once gave offence at a negro ball in New Orleans by putting on a good many airs. Finally one of the managers bustled up to him and said—

“Who *is* you, any way ? Who *is* you ? dat’s what *I* wants to know ! ”

The offender was not disconcerted in the least, but swelled himself up and threw that into his voice which showed that he knew he was not putting on all those airs on a stinted capital.

“Who *is* I ? Who *is* I ? I let you know mighty quick who I is ! I want you niggers to understan’ dat I fires de middle do’ * on de ‘Aleck Scott ! ’ ”

That was sufficient.

The barber of the "Grand 'Turk'" was a spruce young negro, who aired his importance with balmy complacency, and was greatly courted by the circle in which he moved. The young coloured population of New Orleans were much given to flirting, at twilight, on the pavements of the back streets. Somebody saw and heard something like the following, one evening, in one of those localities. A middle-aged negro woman projected her head through a broken pane and shouted (very willing that the neighbours should hear and envy), "You Mary Ann, come in de house dis minute! Stannin' out dah foolin' 'long wid dat low trash, an' heah's de barber off 'n de 'Gran' Turk' wants to converse wid you!"

My reference, a moment ago, to the fact that a pilot's peculiar official position placed him out of the reach of criticism or command, brings Stephen W—— naturally to my mind. He was a gifted pilot, a good fellow, a tireless talker, and had both wit and humour in him. He had a most irreverent independence, too, and was deliciously easy-going and comfortable in the presence of age, official dignity, and even the most august wealth. He always had work, he never saved a penny, he was a most persuasive borrower, he was in debt to every pilot on the river, and to the majority of the captains. He could throw a sort of splendour around a bit of harum-scarum, devil-may-care piloting, that made it

almost fascinating—but not to everybody. He made a trip with good old gentle-spirited Captain Y——once, and was “relieved” from duty when the boat got to New Orleans. Somebody expressed surprise at the discharge. Captain Y—— shuddered at the mere mention of Stephen. Then his poor, thin old voice piped out something like this—

“Why, bless me! I wouldn’t have such a wild creature on my boat for the world—not for the whole world! He swears, he sings, he whistles, he yells—I never saw such an Injun to yell. All times of the night—it never made any difference to him. He would just yell that way, not for anything in particular, but merely on account of a kind of devilish comfort he got out of it. I never could get into a sound sleep, but he would fetch me out of bed, all in a cold sweat, with one of those dreadful war-whoops. A queer being—very queer being; no respect for anything or anybody. Sometimes he called me *Johnny*. And he kept a fiddle and a cat. He played execrably. This seemed to distress the cat, and so the cat would howl. Nobody could sleep where that man—and his family—was. And reckless? There was never anything like it. Now you may believe it or not, but as sure as I am sitting here, he brought my boat a-tilting down through those awful snags at Chicot under a rattling head of steam, and the wind a blowing like the very

nation, at that! My officers will tell you so. They saw it. And, sir, while he was a-tearing right down through those snags, and I a shaking in my shoes and praying, I wish I may never speak again if he didn't pucker up his mouth and go to *whistling*! Yes, sir; whistling 'Buffalo gals, can't you come out to night, can't. you come out to-night, can't you come out to night;' and doing it as calmly as if he were attending a funeral and weren't related to the corpse. And when I remonstrated with him about it, he smiled down on me as if I was a child, and told me to run in the house and try to be good, and not be meddling with my superiors!" *

Once a pretty mean captain caught Stephen in New Orleans out of work, and as usual out of money. He laid steady siege to Stephen, who was in a very "close place," and finally persuaded him to hire with him at one hundred and twenty-five dollars per month, just half wages—the captain agreeing not to divulge the secret and so bring down the contempt of all the guild upon the poor fellow. But the boat was not more than a day out of New Orleans before Stephen discovered that the captain was boasting of his exploit, and that all the officers had been told. Stephen winced but said nothing. About the middle of the

* Considering a captain's ostentatious but hollow chieftainship, and a pilot's real authority, there was something impudently apt and happy about that way of phrasing it.

afternoon the captain stepped out on the hurricane deck, cast his eye around, and looked a good deal surprised. He glanced inquiringly aloft at Stephen, but Stephen was whistling placidly, and attending to business. The captain stood around awhile in evident discomfort, and once or twice seemed about to make a suggestion; but the etiquette of the river taught him to avoid that sort of rashness, and so he managed to hold his peace. He chafed and puzzled a few minutes longer, then retired to his apartment. But soon he was out again, and apparently more perplexed than ever. Presently he ventured to remark, with deference—

“Pretty good stage of the river now, ain’t it, sir?”

“Well I should say so! Bank-full is a pretty liberal stage.”

“Seems to be a good deal of current here?”

“Good deal don’t describe it. It’s worse than a mill race.”

“Isn’t it easier in toward shore than it is out here in the middle?”

“Yes, I reckon it is; but a body can’t be too careful with a steamboat; it’s pretty safe out here; can’t strike any bottom here, you can depend on that.”

The captain departed, looking rueful enough. At this rate he would probably die of old age before his boat got to St. Louis. Next day he appeared

on deck, and again found Stephen faithfully standing up in the middle of the river, fighting the whole vast force of the Mississippi, and whistling the same placid tune. This thing was becoming serious. In by the shore was a slower boat clipping along in the easy water and gaining steadily; she began to make for an island chute; Stephen stuck to the middle of the river. Speech was *wrung* from the captain. He said—

“Mr. W——, don’t that chute cut off a good deal of distance?”

“I think it does, but I don’t know.”

“Don’t know! Well, isn’t there water enough in it now to go through?”

“I expect there is, but I am not certain.”

“Upon my word this is odd. Why, those pilots on that boat yonder are going to try it. Do you mean to say that you don’t know as much as they do?”

“*They!* Why, *they* are two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar pilots! But don’t you be uneasy; I know as much as any man can afford to know for a hundred and twenty-five.”

Five minutes later Stephen was bowling through the chute and showing the rival boat a two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar pair of heels.

One day on board the “Aleck Scott,” my chief, Mr. B——, was crawling carefully through a close place at Cat Island, both leads going, and everybody holding his breath. The captain, a nervous apprehen-

sive man, kept still as long as he could, but finally broke down and shouted from the hurricane deck—

“For gracious sake, give her steam, Mr. B——! give her steam! She’ll never raise the reef on this headway!”

For all the effect that was produced upon Mr. B——, one would have supposed that no remark had been made. But five minutes later, when the danger was past and the leads laid in, he burst instantly into a consuming fury, and gave the captain the most admirable cursing I ever listened to. No bloodshed ensued; but that was because the captain’s cause was weak; for ordinarily he was not a man to take correction quietly.

Having now set forth in detail the nature of the science of piloting, and likewise describing the rank which the pilot held among the fraternity of steamboatmen, this seems a fitting place to say a few words about an organization which the pilots once formed for the protection of their guild. It was curious and noteworthy in this, that it was perhaps the compactest, the completest, and the strongest commercial organization ever formed among men.

For a long time wages had been two hundred and fifty dollars a month; but curious enough, as steamboats multiplied and business increased, the wages began to fall, little by little. It was easy to discover the reason of this. Too many pilots were

oeing "made." It was nice to have a "cub," a steersman, to do all the hard work for a couple of years gratis, while his master sat on a high bench and smoked; all pilots and captains had sons or brothers who wanted to be pilots. By and by it came to pass that nearly every pilot on the river had a steersman. When a steersman had made an amount of progress that was satisfactory to any two pilots in the trade, they could get a pilot's license for him by signing an application directed to the United States Inspector. Nothing further was needed; usually no questions were asked, no proofs of capacity required.

Very well, this growing swarm of new pilots presently began to undermine the wages, in order to get berths. Too late—apparently—the knights of the tiller perceived their mistake. Plainly something had to be done, and quickly; but what was to be the needful thing; a close organization. Nothing else would answer. To compass this seemed an impossibility; so it was talked, and talked, and then dropped. It was too likely to ruin whoever ventured to move in the matter. But at last about a dozen of the boldest—and some of them the best—pilots on the river launched themselves into the enterprise and took all the chances. They got a special charter from the legislature, with large powers, under the name of the Pilots' Benevolent Association; elected their officers, completed their organization, contri-

buted capital, put "association" wages up to two hundred and fifty dollars at once—and then retired to their homes for they were promptly discharged from employment. But there were two or three unnoticed trifles in their bye-laws which had the seeds of propagation in them. For instance, all idle members of the association, in good standing, were entitled to a pension of twenty-five dollars per month. This began to bring in one straggler after another from the ranks of the new-fledged pilots, in the dull (summer) season. Better have twenty-five dollars than starve; the initiation fee was only twelve dollars, and no dues required from the unemployed.

Also, the widows of deceased members in good standing could draw twenty-five dollars per month, and a certain sum for each of their children. Also, the said deceased would be buried at the association's expense. These things resurrected all the superannuated and forgotten pilots in the Mississippi Valley. They came from farms, they came from interior villages, they came from everywhere. They came on crutches, on drays, in ambulances—any way, so they got there. They paid in their twelve dollars, and straightway began to draw out twenty-five dollars a month and calculate their burial bills.

By and by, all the useless, helpless pilots, and a dozen first-class ones, were in the association, and nine-tenths of the best pilots out of it and laughing

at it. It was the laughing-stock of the whole river. Everybody joked about the bye-law requiring members to pay ten per cent. of their wages, every month into the treasury for the support of the association, whereas all the members were outcast and tabooed, and no one would employ them. Everybody was derisively grateful to the association for taking all the worthless pilots out of the way, and leaving the whole field to the excellent and the deserving; and everybody was not only jocularly grateful for that, but for a result which naturally followed—namely, the gradual advance of wages as the busy season approached. Wages had gone up from the low figure of one hundred dollars a month to one hundred and twenty-five, and in some cases to one hundred and fifty; and it was great fun to enlarge upon the fact that this charming thing had been accomplished by a body of men not one of whom received a particle of benefit from it. Some of the jokers used to call at the association rooms and have a good time chaffing the members, and offering them the charity of taking them as steersmen for a trip, so that they could see what the forgotten river looked like. However, the association was content; or at least it gave no sign to the contrary. Now and then it captured a pilot who was “out of luck,” and added him to its list; and these later additions were very valuable, for they were good pilots; the incompetent ones had all been

absorbed before. As business freshened, wages climbed gradually up to two hundred and fifty dollars—the association figure—and became firmly fixed there ; and still without benefiting a member of that body, for no member was hired. The hilarity at the association's expense burst all bounds now. There was no end to the fun which that poor martyr had to put up with.

However, it is a long lane that has no turning. Winter approached, business doubled and trebled, and an avalanche of Missouri, Illinois, and Upper Mississippi River boats came pouring down to take : chance in the New Orleans trade. All of a sudden pilots were in great demand, and were correspondingly scarce. The time for revenge was come. It was a bitter pill to have to accept association pilots at last, yet captains and owners agreed that there was no other way. But none of these outcasts offered ! So there was a still bitterer pill to be swallowed : they must be sought out and asked for their services. Captain —— was the first man who found it necessary to take the dose, and he had been the loudest derider of the organization. He hunted up one of the best of the association pilots, and said, “ Well, you boys have rather got the best of us for a little while, so I'll give in with as good a grace as I can. I've come to hire you ; get your trunk aboard right away. I want to leave at twelve o'clock.”

"I don't know about that. Who is your other pilot?"

"I've got I. S——. Why?"

"I can't go with him; he don't belong to the association."

"What!"

"It's so."

"Do you mean to tell me that you won't turn a wheel with one of the very best and oldest pilots on the river because he don't belong to your association?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, if this isn't putting on airs! I supposed I was doing you a benevolence; but I begin to think that I am the party that wants a favour done. Are you acting under a law of the concern?"

"Yes."

"Show it to me."

So they stepped into the association rooms, and the secretary soon satisfied the captain, who said, "Well, what am I to do? I have hired Mr. S—— for the entire season."

"I will provide for you," said the secretary. "I will detail a pilot to go with you, and he shall be on board at twelve o'clock."

"But if I discharge S——, he will come on me for the whole season's wages."

"Of course, that is a matter between you and Mr. S——, captain; we cannot meddle in your private affairs."

The captain stormed, but to no purpose. In the end he had to discharge S——, pay him about a thousand dollars, and take an association pilot in his place. The laugh was beginning to turn the other way now. Every day, thenceforward, a new victim fell; every day some outraged captain discharged a non-association pet, with tears and profanity, and installed a hated association man in his berth. In a very little while idle non-associationists began to be pretty plenty, brisk as business was, and much as their services were desired. The laugh was shifting to the other side of their mouth most palpably. These victims, together with the captains and owners, presently ceased to laugh altogether, and began to rage about the revenge they would take when the passing business "spurt" was over.

Soon all the laughers that were left were the owners and crews of boats that had two non-association pilots. But their triumph was not very long-lived. For this reason: It was a rigid rule of the association that its members should never, under any circumstances whatever, give information about the channel to any "outsider." By this time about half the boats had none but association pilots, and the other half had none but outsiders. At the first glance one would suppose that when it came to forbidding information about the river, these two parties could play equally at that game; but this was

not so. At every good-sized town, from one end of the river to the other, there was a "wharf-boat" to land at, instead of a wharf or a pier. Freight was stored in it for transportation, waiting passengers slept in its cabins. Upon each of these wharf boats the association's officers placed a strong box, fastened with a peculiar lock which was used in no other service but one—the United States mail service. It was the letter-bag lock, a sacred governmental thing. By dint of much beseeching, the government had been persuaded to allow the association to use this lock. Every association man carried a key which would open these boxes. That key or rather a peculiar way of holding it in the hand when its owner was asked for river information by a stranger—for the success of the St. Louis and New Orleans association had now bred tolerably thriving branches in a dozen neighbouring steamboat trades—was the association man's sign and diploma of membership; and if the stranger did not respond by producing a similar key and holding it in a certain manner duly prescribed, his question was politely ignored. From the association's secretary each member received a package of more or less gorgeous blanks, printed like a bill-head, on handsome paper, properly ruled in columns; a bill-head worded something like this--

STEAMER "GREAT REPUBLIC."

JOHN SMITH, MASTER

Pilots, John Jones and Thos. Brown.

Crossing.	Soundings.	Marks.	Remarks.
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These blanks were filled up day by day, as the voyage progressed, and deposited in the several wharf-boat boxes. For instance, as soon as the first crossing out from St. Louis was completed, the items would be entered upon the blank, under the appropriate headings, thus—

"St. Louis. Nine and a half (feet). Stern on court-house, head on dead cottonwood above wood-yard, until you raise the first reef, then pull up square." Then, under head of remarks, "Go just outside the wrecks; this is important. New snag just where you straighten down; go above it."

The pilot who deposited that blank in the Cairo box (after adding to it the details of every crossing all the way down from St. Louis) took out and read half a dozen fresh reports (from upward-bound steamers) concerning the river between Cairo and Memphis, posted himself thoroughly, returned them to the box, and went back aboard his boat again so armed against accident that he could not possibly get

his boat into trouble without bringing the most ingenious carelessness to his aid.

Imagine the benefits of so admirable a system in a piece of river twelve or thirteen hundred miles long, whose channel was shifting every day! The pilot who had formerly been obliged to put up with seeing a shoal place once or possibly twice a month, had a hundred sharp eyes to watch it for him now, and bushels of intelligent brains to tell him how to run it. His information about it was seldom twenty-four hours old. If the reports in the last box chanced to leave any misgivings on his mind concerning a treacherous crossing, he had his remedy; he blew his steam-whistle in a peculiar way as soon as he saw a boat approaching; the signal was answered in a peculiar way if that boat's pilots were association men; and then the two steamers ranged alongside, and all uncertainties were swept away by fresh information furnished to the inquirer by word of mouth and in minute detail.

The first thing a pilot did when he reached New Orleans or St. Louis was to take his final and elaborate report to the association parlours and hang it up there—*after* which he was free to visit his family. In these parlours a crowd was always gathered together discussing changes in the channel, and the moment there was a fresh arrival, everybody stopped talking till this witness had told the newest news and settled

the latest uncertainty. Other craftsmen can "sink the shop" sometimes, and interest themselves in other matters. Not so with a pilot: he must devote himself wholly to his profession and talk of nothing else, for it would be small gain to be perfect one day and imperfect the next. He has no time or words to waste if he would keep "posted."

But the outsiders had a hard time of it. No particular place to meet and exchange information, no wharf-boat reports, none but chance and unsatisfactory ways of getting news. The consequence was that a man sometimes had to run five hundred miles of river on information that was a week or ten days old. At a fair stage of the river that might have answered; but when the dead low water came it was destructive.

Now came another perfectly logical result. The outsiders began to ground steamboats, sink them, and get into all sorts of trouble, whereas accidents seemed to keep entirely away from the association men. Wherefore even the owners and captains of boats furnished exclusively with outsiders, and previously considered to be wholly independent of the association and free to comfort themselves with brag and laughter, began to feel pretty uncomfortable. Still, they made a show of keeping up the brag, until one black day, when every captain of the lot was formally ordered immediately to discharge his

outsiders and take association pilots in their stead. And who was it that had the gaudy presumption to do that? Alas, it came from a power behind the throne, that was greater than the throne itself. It was the underwriters!

It was no time to "swap knives." Every outsider had to take his trunk ashore at once. Of course it was supposed that there was collusion between the association and the underwriters, but this was not so. The latter had come to comprehend the excellence of the "report" system of the association and the safety it secured, and so they had made their decision among themselves and upon plain business principles.

There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the camp of the outsiders now. But no matter, there was but one course for them to pursue, and they pursued it. They came forward in couples and groups, and proffered their twelve dollars and asked for membership. They were surprised to learn that several new bye-laws had been long ago added. For instance, the initiation fee had been raised to fifty dollars; that sum must be tendered, and also ten per cent. of the wages which the applicant had received each and every month since the founding of the association. In many cases this amounted to three or four hundred dollars. Still, the association would not entertain the application until the money

was present. Even then a single adverse vote killed the application. Every member had to vote yes or no in person and before witnesses; so it took weeks to decide a candidacy, because many pilots were so long absent on voyages. However, the repentant sinners scraped their savings together, and one by one, by our tedious voting process, they were added to the fold. A time came at last when only about ten remained outside. They said they would starve before they would apply. They remained idle a long while, because of course nobody could venture to employ them.

By and by the association published the fact that upon a certain date the wages would be raised to five hundred dollars per month. All the branch associations had grown strong now, and the Red River one had advanced wages to seven hundred dollars a month. Reluctantly the ten outsiders yielded, in view of these things, and made application. There was *another* new bye-law by this time, which required them to pay dues not only on all the wages they had received since the association was born, but also on what they would have received if they had continued at work up to the time of their application, instead of going off to pout in idleness. It turned out to be a difficult matter to elect them, but it was accomplished at last. The most virulent sinner of this batch had stayed out and allowed "dues" to accumu-

late against him so long that he had to send in six hundred and twenty-five dollars with his application.

The association had a good bank account now, and was very strong. There was no longer an outsider. A byc-law was added forbidding the reception of any more cubs or apprentices for five years; after which time a limited number would be taken, not by individuals, but by the association, upon these terms: The applicant must not be less than eighteen years old, of respectable family and good character; he must pass an examination as to education, pay a thousand dollars in advance for the privilege of becoming an apprentice, and must remain under the commands of the association until a great part of the membership (more than half, I think) should be willing to sign his application for a pilot's license.

All previously articulated apprentices were now taken away from their masters and adopted by the association. The president and secretary detailed them for service on one boat or another, as they chose, and changed them from boat to boat according to certain rules. If a pilot could show that he was in infirm health and needed assistance, one of the cubs would be ordered to go with him.

The widow and orphan list grew, but so did the association's financial resources. The association attended its own funerals in state, and paid for them. When occasion demanded, it sent members down the

river upon searches for the bodies of brethren lost by steamboat accidents; a search of this kind sometimes cost a thousand dollars.

The association procured a charter and went into the insurance business, also. It not only insured the lives of its members, but took risks on steam-boats.

The organization seemed indestructible. It was the tightest monopoly in the world. By the United States law, no man could become a pilot unless two duly licensed pilots signed his application; and now there was nobody outside of the association competent to sign. Consequently the making of pilots was at an end. Every year some would die and others become incapacitated by age and infirmity; there would be no new ones to take their places. In time, the association could put wages up to any figure it chose; and as long as it should be wise enough not to carry the thing too far and provoke the national government into amending the licensing system, steamboat owners would have to submit, since there would be no help for it.

The owners and captains were the only obstruction that lay between the association and absolute power; and at last this one was removed. Incredible as it may seem, the owners and captains deliberately did it themselves. When the pilots' association announced, months beforehand, that on the first day of September, 1861, wages would be advanced to five

hundred dollars per month, the owners and captains instantly put freights up a few cents, and explained to the farmers along the river the necessity of it, by calling their attention to the burdensome rate of wages about to be established. It was a rather slender argument, but the farmers did not seem to detect it. It looked reasonable to them that to add five cents freight on a bushel of corn was justifiable under the circumstances, over-looking the fact that this advance on a cargo of forty thousand sacks was a good deal more than necessary to cover the new wages.

So straightway the captains and owners got up an association of their own, and proposed to put captains' wages up to five hundred dollars, too, and move for another advance in freights. It was a novel idea, but of course an effect which had been produced once could be produced again. The new association decreed (for this was before all the outsiders had been taken into the pilots' association) that if any captain employed a non-association pilot, he should be forced to discharge him, and also pay a fine of five hundred dollars. Several of these heavy fines were paid before the captains' organization grew strong enough to exercise full authority over its membership; but that all ceased, presently. The captains tried to get the pilots to decree that no member of their corporation should serve under a non-association captain; but

this proposition was declined. The pilots saw that they would be backed up by the captains and the underwriters anyhow, and so they wisely refrained from entering into entangling alliances.

As I have remarked, the pilots' association was now the compactest monopoly in the world, perhaps, and seemed simply indestructible. And yet the days of its glory were numbered. First, the new railroad stretching up through Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky, to Northern railway centres, began to divert the passenger travel from the steamers; next the war came and almost entirely annihilated the steamboating industry during several years, leaving most of the pilots idle, and the cost of living advancing all the time; then the treasurer of the St. Louis association put his hand into the till and walked off with every dollar of the ample fund; and finally, the railroads intruding everywhere, there was little for steamers to do, when the war was over, but carry freights; so straightway some genius from the Atlantic coast introduced the plan of towing a dozen steamer cargoes down to New Orleans at the tail of a vulgar little tug-boat; and behold, in the twinkling of an eye, as it were, the association and the noble science of piloting were things of the dead and pathetic past!



VII.

LEAVING PORT : RACING : SHORTENING OF THE RIVER BY
CUT-OFFS : A STEAMBOAT'S GHOST : "STEPHEN'S"
PLAN OF "RESUMPTION."

It was always the custom for the boats to leave New Orleans between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. From three o'clock onward they would be burning resin and pitch pine (the sign of preparation), and so one had the picturesque spectacle of a rank, some two or three miles long, of tall, ascending columns of coal-black smoke ; a colonnade which supported a sable roof of the same smoke blending together and spreading abroad over the city. Every outward-bound boat had its flag flying at the jack-staff, and sometimes a duplicate on the vergè staff astern. Two or three miles of mates were commanding and swearing with more than usual emphasis ; countless processions of freight barrels and boxes were spinning down the slant of the levee and flying aboard the stage-planks ; belated passengers were dodging and skipping among these frantic things, hoping to

reach the forecastle companion way alive, but having their doubts about it; women with reticules and handboxes were trying to keep up with husbands freighted with carpet-sacks and crying babies, and making a failure of it by losing their heads in the whirl and roar and general distraction; drays and baggage-vans were clattering hither and thither in a wild hurry, every now and then getting blocked and jammed together, and then during ten seconds one could not see them for the profanity, except vaguely and dimly; every windlass connected with every fore-hatch, from one end of that long array of steam-boats to the other, was keeping up a deafening whiz and whirl, lowering freight into the hold, and the half naked crews of perspiring negroes that worked them were roaring such songs as *De Las' Sack! De Las' Sack!*—inspired to unimaginable exaltation by the chaos of turmoil and racket that was driving everybody else mad. By this time the hurricane and boiler decks of the steamers would be packed and black with passengers. The “last bells” would begin to clang, all down the line, and then the pow-wow seemed to double; in a moment or two the final warning came—a simultaneous din of Chinese gongs, with the cry, “All dat ain’t goin’, please to get asho’!”—and behold, the pow-wow quadrupled! People came swarming ashore, overturning excited stragglers that were trying to swarm aboard. One more moment

later a long array of stage-planks was being hauled in, each with its customary latest passenger clinging to the end of it with teeth, nails, and everything else, and the customary latest procrastinator making a wild spring shoreward over his head.

Now a number of the boats slide backward into the stream, leaving wide gaps in the serried rank of steamers. Citizens crowd the decks of boats that are not to go, in order to see the sight. Steamer after steamer straightens herself up, gathers all her strength, and presently comes swinging by, under a tremendous head of steam, with flag flying, black smoke rolling, and her entire crew of firemen and deck-hands (usually swarthy negroes) massed together on the forecastle, the best "voice" in the lot towering from the midst (being mounted on the capstan), waving his hat or a flag, and all roaring a mighty chorus, while the parting cannons boom and the multitudinous spectators swing their hats and huzza! Steamer after steamer falls into line, and the stately procession goes winging its way up the river.

In the old times, whenever two fast boats started out on a race, with a big crowd of people looking on, it was inspiring to hear the crews sing, especially if the time were night-fall, and the forecastle lit up with the red glare of the torch-baskets. Racing was royal fun. The public always had an idea that racing was dangerous; whereas the very opposite was the case—

that is, after the laws were passed which restricted each boat to just so many pounds of steam to the square inch. No engineer was ever sleepy or careless when his heart was in a race. He was constantly on the alert, trying gauge-cocks and watching things. The dangerous place was on slow, popular boats, where the engineers drowsed around and allowed ships to get into the "doctor" and shut off the water supply from the boilers.

In the "flush times" of steamboating, a race between two notoriously fleet steamers was an event of vast importance. The date was set for it several weeks in advance, and from that time forward, the whole Mississippi Valley was in a state of consuming excitement. Politics and the weather were dropped, and people talked only of the coming race. As the time approached, the two steamers "stripped" and got ready. Every incumbrance that added weight, or exposed a resisting surface to wind or water, was removed, if the boat could possibly do without it. The "spars," and sometimes even their supporting derricks, were sent ashore, and no means left to set the boat afloat in case she got aground. When the "Eclipse" and the "A. L. Shotwell" ran their great race twenty-two years ago, it was said that pains were taken to scrape the gilding off the fanciful device which hung between the "Eclipse's" chimneys, and that for that one trip the captain left

off his kid gloves and had his head shaved. But I always doubted these things.

If the boat was known to make her best speed when drawing five and a half feet forward and five feet aft, she was carefully loaded to that exact figure—she wouldn't enter a dose of homoeopathic pills on her manifest after that. Hardly any passengers were taken, because they not only add weight but they never will "trim boat." They always run to the side when there is anything to see, whereas a conscientious and experienced steamboatman would stick to the centre of the boat and part his hair in the middle with a spirit level.

No way-freights and no way-passengers were allowed, for the racers would stop only at the largest towns, and then it would be only "touch and go." Coal flats and wood flats were contracted for beforehand, and these were kept ready to hitch on to the flying steamers at a moment's warning. Double crews were carried, so that all work could be quickly done.

The chosen date being come, and all things in readiness, the two great steamers back into the stream, and lie there jockeying a moment, and apparently watching each other's slightest movement, like sentient creatures; flags drooping, the pent steam shrieking through safety-valves, the black smoke rolling and tumbling from the chimneys and darken.

ing all the air. People, people everywhere; the shores, the house-tops, the steamboats, the ships, are packed with them, and you know that the borders of the broad Mississippi are going to be fringed with humanity thence northward twelve hundred miles, to welcome these racers.

Presently tall columns of steam burst from the 'scape-pipes of both steamers, two guns boom a good-by, two red-shirted heroes mounted on capstans wave their small flags above the massed crews on the fore-castles, two plaintive solos linger on the air a few waiting seconds, two mighty choruses burst forth—and here they come! Brass bands bray "Hail Columbia," huzza after huzza thunders from the shores, and the stately creatures go whistling by like the wind.

Those boats will never halt a moment between New Orleans and St. Louis, except for a second or two at large towns, or to hitch thirty-cord wood-boats alongside. You should be on board when they take a couple of those wood-boats in tow and turn a swarm of men into each; by the time you have wiped your glasses and put them on, you will be wondering what has become of that wood.

Two nicely-matched steamers will stay in sight of each other day after day. They might even stay side by side, but for the fact that pilots are not all alike, and the smartest pilots will win the race. If one of

the boats has a "lightning" pilot, whose "partner" is a trifle his inferior, you can tell which one is on watch by noting whether that boat has gained ground or lost some during each four-hour stretch. The shrewdest pilot can delay a boat if he has not a fine genius for steering. Steering is a very high art. One must not keep a rudder dragging across a boat's stern if he wants to get up the river fast.

There is a marvellous difference in boats, of course. For a long time I was on a boat that was so slow we used to forget what year it was we left port in. But of course this was at rare intervals. Ferry-boats used to lose valuable trips because their passengers grew old and died, waiting for us to get by. This was at still rarer intervals. I had the documents for these occurrences, but through carelessness they have been mislaid. This boat, the "John J. Roe," was so slow that when she finally sunk in Madrid Bend, it was five years before the owners heard of it. That was always a confusing fact to me, but it is according to the record, any way. She was dismally slow; still we often had pretty exciting times racing with islands, and rafts, and such things. One trip, however, we did rather well. We went to St. Louis in sixteen days. But even at this rattling gait I think we changed watches three times in Fort Adams reach, which is five miles long. A "reach" is a piece of straight river, and of course the current

drives through such a place in a pretty lively way.

That trip we went to Grand Gulf, from New Orleans, in four days (three hundred and forty miles); the "Eclipse" and "Shotwell" did it in one. We were nine days out, in the chute of 63 (seven hundred miles); the "Eclipse" and "Shotwell" went there in two days.

Just about a generation ago, a boat called the "J. M. White" went from New Orleans to Cairo in three days, six hours, and forty-four minutes. Twenty-two years ago the "Eclipse" made the same trip in three days, three hours, and twenty minutes. About five years ago the superb "R. E. Lee" did it in three days and *one* hour. The last is called the fastest trip on record. I will try to show that it was not. For this reason: the distance between New Orleans and Cairo, when the "J. M. White" ran it, was about eleven hundred and six miles; consequently her average speed was a trifle over fourteen miles per hour. In the "Eclipse's" day the distance between the two ports had become reduced to one thousand and eighty miles; consequently her average speed was a shade under fourteen and three-eighths miles per hour. In the "R. E. Lee's" time the distance had diminished to about one thousand and thirty miles, consequently her average was about fourteen and one-eighth miles per hour. Therefore the "Eclipse's"

was conspicuously the fastest time that has ever been made.

These dry details are of importance in one particular. They give me an opportunity of introducing one of the Mississippi's oddest peculiarities—that of shortening its length from time to time. If you will throw a long, pliant apple-paring over your shoulder, it will pretty fairly shape itself into an average section of the Mississippi River; that is, the nine or ten hundred miles stretching from Cairo, Illinois, southward to New Orleans, the same being wonderfully crooked, with a brief straight bit here and there at wide intervals. The two-hundred-mile stretch from Cairo northward to St. Louis is by no means crooked, that being a rocky country which the river cannot cut much.

The water cuts the alluvial banks of the "lower" river into deep horseshoe curves; so deep, indeed, that in some places if you were to get ashore at one extremity of the horseshoe and walk across the neck, half or three-quarters of a mile, you could sit down and rest a couple of hours while your steamer was coming around the long elbow, at a speed of ten miles an hour, to take you aboard again. When the river is rising fast, some scoundrel whose plantation is back in the country, and therefore of inferior value, has only to watch his chance, cut a little gutter across the narrow neck of land some dark night, and turn

the water into it, and in a wonderfully short time a miracle has happened: to wit, the whole Mississippi has taken possession of that little ditch, and placed the countryman's plantation on its bank (quadrupling its value), and that other party's formerly valuable plantation finds itself away out yonder on a big island; the old water-course around it will soon shoal up, boats cannot approach within ten miles of it, and down goes its value to a fourth of its former worth. Watches are kept on these narrow necks, at needful times, and if a man happens to be caught cutting a ditch across them, the chances are all against his ever having another opportunity to cut a ditch.

Pray observe some of the effects of this ditching business. Once there was a neck opposite Port Hudson, Louisiana, which was only half a mile across, in its narrowest place. You could walk across there in fifteen minutes; but if you made the journey around the cape on a raft, you travelled thirty-five miles to accomplish the same thing. In 1722 the river darted through that neck, deserted its old bed, and thus shortened itself thirty-five miles. In the same way it shortened itself twenty-five miles at Black Hawk Point in 1699. Below Red River Landing, Raccourci cut-off was made (thirty or forty years ago, I think). This shortened the river twenty-eight miles. In our day, if you travel by river from the southernmost of these three cut-offs to the northern-

most, you go only seventy miles. To do the same thing a hundred and seventy-six years ago, one had to go a hundred and fifty-eight miles!—a shortening of eighty-eight miles in that trifling distance. At some forgotten time in the past, cut-offs were made above Vidalia, Louisiana; at island 92; at island 84; and at Hale's Point. These shortened the river, in the aggregate, seventy-seven miles.

Since my own day on the Mississippi, I am informed that cut-offs have been made at Hurricane Island; at island 100; at Napoleon, Arkansas; at Walnut Bend; and at Council Bend. These shortened the river in the aggregate, sixty-seven miles. In my own time a cut-off was made at American Bend, which shortened the river ten miles or more.

Therefore: the Mississippi between Cairo and New Orleans was twelve hundred and fifteen miles long one hundred and seventy-six years ago. It was eleven hundred and eighty after the cut-off of 1722. It was one thousand and forty after the American Bend cut-off (some sixteen or seventeen years ago). It has lost sixty-seven miles since. Consequently, its length is only nine hundred and seventy-three miles at present.

Now, if I wanted to be one of those ponderous scientific people, and "let on" to prove what had occurred in the remote past by what had occurred in a given time in the recent past, or what will occur in

the far future by what has occurred in late years, what an opportunity is here! Geology never had such a chance, nor such exact data to argue from! Nor "development of species," either! Glacial epochs are great things, but they are vague—vague. Please observe—

In the space of one hundred and seventy-six years the Lower Mississippi has shortened itself two hundred and forty-two miles. That is an average of a trifle over one mile and a third per year. Therefore, any calm person, who is not blind or idiotic, can see that in the Old Oölitic Silurian Period, just a million years ago next November, the Lower Mississippi River was upwards of one million three hundred thousand miles long, and stuck out over the Gulf of Mexico like a fishing-rod. And by the same token any person can see that seven hundred and forty-two years from now the Lower Mississippi will be only a mile and three quarters long, and Cairo and New Orleans will have joined their streets together, and be plodding comfortably along under a single mayor and a mutual board of aldermen. There is something fascinating about science. One gets such wholesale returns of conjecture out of such a trifling investment of fact.

When the water begins to flow through one of those ditches I have been speaking of, it is time for the people thereabouts to move. The water cleave

the banks away like a knife. By the time the ditch has become twelve or fifteen feet wide, the calamity is as good as accomplished, for no power on earth can stop it now. When the width has reached a hundred yards, the banks begin to peel off in slices half an acre wide. The current flowing around the bend travelled formerly only five miles an hour; now it is tremendously increased by the shortening of the distance. I was on board the first boat that tried to go through the cut-off at American Bend, but we did not get through. It was toward midnight, and a wild night it was—thunder, lightning, and torrents of rain. It was estimated that the current in the cut-off was making about fifteen or twenty miles an hour; twelve or thirteen was the best our boat could do, even in tolerably slack water, therefore perhaps we were foolish to try the cut-off. However, Mr. X—— was ambitious, and he kept on trying. The eddy running up the bank, under the “point,” was about as swift as the current out in the middle; so we would go flying up the shore like a lightning express train, get on a big head of steam, and “stand by for a surge” when we struck the current that was whirling by the point. But all our preparations were useless. The instant the current hit us it spun us around like a top, the water deluged the forecastle, and the boat careened so far over that one could hardly keep his feet. The next instant we were away down the river, clawing

with might and main to keep out of the woods. We tried the experiment four times. I stood on the fore-castle companion way to see. It was astonishing to observe how suddenly the boat would spin around and turn tail the moment she emerged from the eddy and the current struck her nose. The sounding concussion and the quivering would have been about the same if she had come full speed against a sand-bank. Under the lightning flashes one could see the plantation cabins and the goodly acres tumble into the river; and the crash they made was not a bad effort at thunder. Once, when we spun around, we only missed a house about twenty feet, that had a light burning in the window; and in the same instant that house went overboard. Nobody could stay on our fore-castle; the water swept across it in a torrent every time we plunged athwart the current. At the end of our fourth effort we brought up in the woods two miles below the cut-off; all the country there was overflowed of course. A day or two later the cut-off was three-quarters of a mile wide, and boats passed up through it without much difficulty, and so saved ten miles.

The old Kaccourci cut-off reduced the river's length twenty-eight miles. There used to be a tradition connected with it. It was said that a boat came along there in the night and went around the enormous elbow the usual way, the pilots not knowing

that the cut-off had been made. It was a grisly, hideous night, and all shapes were vague and distorted. The old bend had already begun to fill up, and the boat got to running away from mysterious reefs, and occasionally hitting one. The perplexed pilots fell to swearing, and finally uttered the entirely unnecessary wish that they might never get out of that place. As always happens in such cases, that particular prayer was answered, and the others neglected. So to this day that phantom steamer is still butting around in that deserted river, trying to find her way out. More than one grave watchman has sworn to me that on drizzly, dismal nights, he has glanced fearfully down that forgotten river as he passed the head of the island, and seen the faint glow of the spectre steamer's lights drifting through the distant gloom, and heard the muffled cough of her 'scape-pipes and the plaintive cry of her leadsmen.

In the absence of further statistics, I beg to close this series of Old Mississippi articles with one more reminiscence of wayward, careless, ingenious "Stephen," whom I described in a former chapter.

Most of the captains and pilots held Stephen's note for borrowed sums ranging from two hundred and fifty dollars upward. Stephen never paid one of these notes, but he was very prompt and very zealous about renewing them every twelvemonth.

Of course there came a time, at last, when Stephen

could no longer borrow of his ancient creditors; so was obliged to lay in wait for new men who did not know him. Such a victim was good-hearted, simple-natured young Yates (I use a fictitious name, but the real name began, as this one does, with a Y). Young Yates graduated as a pilot, got a berth, and when the month was ended and he stepped up to the clerk's office and received his two hundred and fifty dollars in crisp new bills, Stephen was there! His silvery tongue began to wag, and in a very little while Yates's two hundred and fifty dollars had changed hands. The fact was soon known at pilot headquarters, and the amusement and satisfaction of the old creditors were large and generous. But innocent Yates never suspected that Stephen's promise to pay promptly at the end of the week was a worthless one. Yates called for his money at the stipulated time; Stephen sweetened him up and put him off a week. He called then, according to agreement, and came away sugar-coated again, but suffering under another postponement. So the thing went on. Yates haunted Stephen week after week, to no purpose, and at last gave it up. And then straightway Stephen began to haunt Yates! Wherever Yates appeared, there was the inevitable Stephen. And not only there, but beaming with affection and gushing with apologies for not being able to pay. By and by, whenever poor Yates saw him coming, he would turn and fly, and

drag his company with him, if he had company ; but it was of no use ; his debtor would run him down and corner him. Panting and red-faced, Stephen would come, with outstretched hands and eager eyes, invade the conversation, shake both of Yates's arms loose in their sockets, and begin—

“My, what a race I've had ! I saw you didn't see me, and so I clapped on all steam for fear I'd miss you entirely. And here you are ! there, just stand so, and let me look at you ! Just the same old noble countenance.” [To Yates's friend :] “Just look at him ! *Look* at him ! Ain't it just *good* to look at him ! *Ain't* it now ? Ain't he just a picture ! *Some* call him a picture ; *I* call him a panorama ! That's what he is — an entire panorama. And now I'm reminded ! How I do wish I could have seen you an hour earlier ! For twenty-four hours I've been saving up that two hundred and fifty dollars for you ; been looking for you everywhere. I waited at the Planter's from six yesterday evening till two o'clock this morning, without rest or food ; my wife says : ‘Where have you been all night ?’ I said, ‘This debt lies heavy on my mind.’ She says, ‘In all my days I never saw a man take a debt to heart the way you do.’ I said, ‘It's my nature ; how can I change it ?’ She says, ‘Well, do go to bed and get some rest.’ I said, ‘Not till that poor, noble young man has got his money.’ So I set up all night, and this

morning out I shot, and the first man I struck told me you had shipped on the 'Grand Turk' and gone to New Orleans. Well, sir, I had to lean up against a building and cry. So help me goodness, I couldn't help it. The man that owned the place come out cleaning up with a rag, and said he didn't like to have people cry against his building, and then it seemed to me that the whole world had turned against me, and it wasn't any use to live any more; and coming along an hour ago, suffering no man knows what agony, I met Jim Wilson and paid him the two hundred and fifty dollars on account; and to think that here you are, now, and I havn't got a cent! But as sure as I am standing here on this ground, on this particular brick—there, I've scratched a mark on the brick to remember it by—I'll borrow that money and pay it over to you at twelve o'clock sharp to-morrow! Now, stand so, let me look at you just once more."

And so on. Yates's life became a burden to him. He could not escape his debtor and his debtor's awful sufferings on account of not being able to pay. He dreaded to show himself in the street, lest he should find Stephen lying in wait for him at the corner.

Bogart's billiard saloon was a great resort for pilots in those days. They met there about as much to exchange river news as to play. One morning Yates was there; Stephen was there, too, but kept

out of sight. But by and by, when about all the pilots had arrived who were in town, Stephen suddenly appeared in the midst, and rushed for Yates as for a long-lost brother.

“*Oh*, I am so glad to see you! Oh my soul, the sight of you is such a comfort to my eyes! Gentlemen, I owe all of you money; among you I owe probably forty thousand dollars. I want to pay it; I intend to pay it—every last cent of it. You all know, without my telling you, what sorrow it has cost me to remain so long under such deep obligations to such patient and generous friends; but the sharpest pang I suffer—by far the sharpest—is from the debt I owe to this noble young man here; and I have come to this place this morning especially to make the announcement that I have at last found a method whereby I can pay off all my debts! And most especially I wanted *him* to be here when I announced it. Yes, my faithful friend—my benefactor, I’ve found the method! I’ve found the method to pay off *all* my debts, and you’ll get your money!” Hope dawned in Yates’s eye; then Stephen, beaming benignantly, and placing his hand upon Yates’s head, added, “I am going to pay them off in alphabetical order!”

Then he turned and disappeared. The full significance of Stephen’s “method” did not dawn upon the perplexed and musing crowd for some two minutes; and then Yates murmured with a sigh—

' Well, the Y's stand a gaudy chance He won't get any further than the C's in *this* worlō, and I reckon that after a good deal of eternity has wasted away in the next one, I'll still be referred to up there as 'that poor, ragged pilot that came here from St. Louis in the early days!''



TWO MEN OF SANDY BAR

By BRET HARTE.



TWO MEN OF SANDY BAR.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Courtyard and Corridors of the Rancho.*

MANUELA [*arranging supper-table in corridor L., solus*]. There! Tortillas, chocolate, olives, and—the whisky of the Americans! And supper's ready. But why Don José chooses to-night, of all nights, with this heretic fog lying over the Mission Hills like a wet *serapé*, to take his supper out here, the saints only know. Perhaps it's some distrust of his madcap daughter, the Doña Jovita; perhaps to watch her—who knows? And now to find Diego. Ah, here he comes. So! The old story. He is getting Doña Jovita's horse ready for another madcap journey. Ah! [*Retires to table.*]

Enter cautiously from corridor, L., SANDY MORTON, carrying lady's saddle and blanket; starts on observing MANUELA, and hastily hides saddle and blanket in recess.

Sandy [*aside*]. She's alone. I reckon the old man's at his siesta yet. Ef he'll only hang onto that snooze ten minutes longer, I'll manage to let that gal Jovita slip out to that yer fandango, and no questions asked.

Manuela [*calling SANDY*]. Diego!

Sandy [*aside, without heeding her*]. That's a sweet voice for a serenade. Round, full, high-shouldered, and calkilated

to fetch a man every time. Only thar ain't, to my sartain knowledge, one o' them chaps within a mile of the rancho. [*Laughs.*]

Manuela. Diego!

Sandy [*aside*]. Oh, go on! That's the style o' them Greasers. They'll stand rooted in their tracks, and yell for a chap without knowin' whether he's in sight or sound.

Manuela [*approaching Sandy impatiently*]. Diego!

Sandy [*starting, aside*]. The devil! Why, that's *me* she's after. [*Laughs.*] I clean disremembered that when I kem yer I tole those chaps my name was James,—James Smith [*laughs*], and thet they might call me "Jim." And De-a-go's their lingo for Jim. [*Aloud*! Well, my beauty, De-a-go it is. Now, wot's up?

Manuela. Eh? no sabe!

Sandy. Wot's your little game? [*Embraces her.*]

Manuela [*aside, and recoiling coquettishly*]. Mother of God! He must be drunk again. These Americans have no time for love when they are sober. [*Aloud and coquettishly.*] Let me go, Diego. Don José is coming. He has sent for you. He takes his supper to-night on the corridor. Listen, Diego. He must not see you thus. You have been drinking again. I will keep you from him. I will say you are not well.

Sandy. Couldn't you, my darling, keep him from *me*? Couldn't you make him think *he* was sick? Couldn't you say he's exposin' his precious health by sittin' out thar to-night; thet ther's chills and fever in every breath? [*Aside.*] Ef the old Don plants himself in that chair; that gal's chances for goin' out to-night is gone up.

Manuela. Never. He would suspect at once. Listen, Diego. If Don José does not know that his daughter steals away with you to meet some *caballero*, some *lover*,—you understand, Diego,—it is because he does not know, or would not *soon* to know, what every one else in the rancho knows.

Have a care, foolish Diego ! If Don José is old and blind, look you, friend, we are *not*. You understand ?

Sandy [aside]. What the devil does she expect ? — money ? No ! *[Aloud.]* Look yer, Manuela, you ain't goin' to blow on that young gal ! *[Putting his arm around her waist.]* Allowin' that she hez a lover, thar ain't nothin' onnateral in thet, bein' a purty sort o' gal. Why, suppose somebody should see you and me together like this, and should just let on to the old man.

Manuela. Hush ! *[Disengaging herself.]* Hush ! He is coming. Let me go, Diego. It is Don José !

Enter DON JOSÉ, who walks gravely to the table, and seats himself. MANUELA retires to table.

Sandy [aside]. I wonder if he saw us. I hope he did : it would shut that Manuela's mouth for a month of Sundays. *[Laughs.]* God forgive me for it ! I've done a heap of things for that young gal Doña Jovita ; but this yer gittin' soft on the Greaser maid-servant to help out the missis, is a little more than Sandy Morton bargained fur.

Don José [to MANUELA]. You can retire. Diego will attend me. *[Looks at DIEGO attentively.]*

[Exit MANUELA.]

Sandy [aside]. Diego will attend him ! Why, blast his yellor skin, does he allow that Sandy Morton hired out as a purty waiter-gal ? Because I calkilated to feed his horses, it ain't no reason thet my dooty to animals don't stop thar. Pass his hash ! *[Turns to follow MANUELA, but stops.]* Hello, Sandy ! wot are ye doin', eh ? You ain't going back on Miss Jovita, and jest spile that gal's chances to git out to-night, on'y to teach that God-forsaken old gov'ment mule manners ? No ! I'll humour the old man, and keep one eye out for the gal. *[Comes to table, and leans familiarly over the back of DON JOSÉ's chair.]*

Don José [aside]. He seems insulted and annoyed. His

manner strengthens my worst suspicions. He has not expected this. [*Aloud.*] Chocolate, Diego.

Sandy [*leaning over table carelessly*]. Yes, I reckon it's somewhar thar.

Don José [*aside*]. He is unused to menial labour. If I should be right in my suspicions ! if he really were Doña Jovita's secret lover ! This gallantry with the servants only a deceit ! *Bueno !* I will watch him. [*Aloud.*] Chocolate, Diego !

Sandy [*aside*]. I wonder if the old fool reckons I'll pour it out. Well, seein's he's the oldest. [*Pours chocolate awkwardly, and spills it on the table and DON JOSÉ*].

Don José [*aside*]. He is embarrassed. I am right. [*Aloud.*] Diego !

Sandy [*leaning confidentially over DON JOSÉ's chair*]. Well, old man !

Don José. Three months ago my daughter the Doña Jovita picked you up, a wandering vagabond, in the streets of the Mission. [*Aside.*] He does not seem ashamed. [*Aloud.*] She — she — ahem ! The *aguardiente*, Diego.

Sandy [*aside*]. That means the whisky. It's wonderful how quick a man learns Spanish. [*Passes the bottle, fills DON JOSÉ's glass, and then his own. DON JOSÉ recoils in astonishment.*] I looks toward ye, ole man. [*Tosses off liquor.*]

Don José [*aside*]. This familiarity ! He is a gentleman. *Bueno !* [*Aloud.*] She was thrown from her horse ; her skirt caught in the stirrup ; she was dragged ; you saved her life. You —

Sandy [*interrupting, confidentially drawing a chair to the table, and seating himself*]. Look yer ! I'll tell you all about it It wasn't that gal's fault, ole man. The hoss shied at me, lying drunk in a ditch, you see ; the hoss backed, the surcle broke ; it warn't in human natur for her to keep her seat, and that gal rides like an angel ; but the mustang throwed her. Well, I sorter got in the way o' thet hoss, and

it stopped. Hevin' bin the cause o' the hoss shyin', for I reckon I didn't look much like an angel lyin' in that ditch, it was about the only squar thing for me to waltz in and help the gal. Thar, thet's about the way the thing pints. Now, don't you go and hold that agin her !

Don José. Well, well ! She was grateful. She has a strange fondness for you Americans ; and at her solicitation I gave you — *you*, an unknown vagrant — employment here as groom. You comprehend, Diego. I, Don José Castro, proprietor of this rancho, with a hundred idle *vaqueros* on my hands,—I made a place for you.

Sandy [meditatively]. Umph.

Don José. You said you would reform. How have you kept your word ? You were drunk last Wednesday.

Sandy. Thet's so.

Don José. And again last Saturday.

Sandy [slowly]. Look yer, ole man, don't ye be too hard on me : that was the same old drunk.

Don José. I am in no mood for trifling. Hark ye, friend Diego. You have seen, perhaps,—who has not ?—that I am a fond, an indulgent father. But even my consideration for my daughter's strange tastes and follies has its limit. Your conduct is a disgrace to the rancho. You must go.

Sandy [meditatively]. Well, I reckon, perhaps I'd better.

Don José [aside]. His coolness is suspicious. Can it be that he expects the girl will follow him ? Mother of God ! perhaps it has been already planned between them. Good ! Thank heaven ! I can end it here. [*Aloud.*] Diego !

Sandy. Old man.

Don José. For my daughter's sake, you understand,—for her sake,—I am willing to try you once more. Hark ye ! My daughter is young, foolish, and romantic. I have reason to believe, from her conduct lately, that she has contracted an intimacy with some *Americaño*, and that in her ignorance, her foolishness, she has allowed that man to believe

that he might aspire to her hand. Good ! Now listen to me. You shall stay in her service. You shall find out, — you are in her confidence, — you shall find out this American, this adventurer, this lover, if you please, of the Doña Jovita, my daughter ; and you will tell him this, — you will tell him that a union with him is impossible, forbidden ; that the hour she attempts it, without my consent, she is *penniless* ; that this estate, this rancho, passes into the hands of the Holy Church, where even your laws cannot reach it. .

Sandy [leaning familiarly over the table]. But suppose that he sees that little bluff, and calls ye.

Don José. I do not comprehend you [*coldly*].

Sandy. Suppose he loves that gal, and will take her as she stands, without a cent, or hide or hair of yer old cattle.

Don José [scornfully]. Suppose — a miracle ! Hark ye, Diego ! It is now five years since I have known your countrymen, these smart *Americaños*. I have yet to know when love, sentiment, friendship, was worth any more than a money value in your market.

Sandy [truculently and drunkenly]. You hev, hev ye ? Well, look yar, ole man. Suppose I *refuse*. Suppose I'd rather go than act as a spy on that young gal your darter ! Suppose that — ~~hic~~ — allowin' she's my friend, I'd rather starve in the gutters of the Mission than stand between her and the man she fancies. Hey ? Suppose I would — damn me ! Suppose I'd see you and your derved old rancho in — t'other place — ~~hic~~ — damn me ! You hear me, ole man ! That's the kind o' man I am — damn me !

Don José [aside, rising contemptuously]. It is as I suspected. Traitor ! Ingrate ! Satisfied that his scheme has failed, he is ready to abandon her. And this — *this is* the man for whom she has been ready to sacrifice everything, — her home, her father ! [*Aloud, coldly.*] Be it so, Diego : you shall go.

Sandy [soberly and seriously, after a pause]. Well, I

reckon I had better. [*Rising.*] I've a few duds, old man, to put up. It won't take me long. [*Goes to L., and pauses.*]

Don José [*aside*]. Ah! he hesitates! He is changing his mind. [*SANDY returns slowly to table, pours out glass of liquor, nods to DON JOSÉ, and drinks.*] I looks toward ye, ole man. *Adios!* [*Exit SANDY.*]

Don José. His coolness is perfect. If these Americans are cayotes in their advances, they are lions in retreat! *Bueno!* I begin to respect him. But it will be just as well to set Concho to track him to the Mission; and I will see that he leaves the rancho alone. [*Exit JOSÉ.*]

Enter hurriedly JOVITA CASTRO, in riding habit, with whip.

So! Chiquita not yet saddled, and that spy Concho haunting the plains for the last half-hour. What an air of mystery! Something awful, something deliciously dreadful, has happened! Either my amiable drunkard has forgotten to despatch Concho on his usual-fool's errand, or he is himself lying helpless in some ditch. Was there ever a girl so persecuted? With a father wrapped in mystery, a lover nameless and shrouded in the obscurity of some Olympian height, and her only confidant and messenger a Bacchus instead of a Mercury! Heigh ho! And in another hour Don Juan—he told me I might call him John—will be waiting for me outside the convent wall! What if Diego fails me? To go there alone would be madness! Who else would be as charmingly unconscious and inattentive as this American vagabond! [*Goes to L.*] Ah, my saddle and blanket hidden! He *has* been interrupted. Some one has been watching. This freak of my father's means something. And to-night, of all nights, the night that Oakhurst was to disclose himself, and tell me all! What is to be done? Hark! [*DIEGO, without, singing.*]

"Oh, here's your *aguardiente*,
Drink it down!"

Jovita. It is Diego; and, Mother of God! drunk again!

Enter SANDY, carrying pack, intoxicated; staggers to centre, and, observing JOVITA, takes off his hat respectfully.

Jovita [*shaking him by the shoulders passionately*]. Diego! How dare you! And at such a time!

Sandy [*with drunken solemnity*]. Miss Jovita, did ye ever know me to be drunk afore at such a time?

Jovita. No.

Sandy. Zachy so. It's abnormal. And it means—the game's up.

Jovita. I do not understand. For the love of God, Diego, be plain!

Sandy [*solemnly and drunkenly*]. When say your game's up, I mean the old man knows it all. You're blowed upon. Hearken, miss! [*Seriously and soberly.*] Your father knows all that I know; but, as it wasn't my business to interfere with, I hev sorter helped along. He knows that you meet a stranger, an American, in these rides with me.

Jovita [*passionately*]. Ingrate! You have not dared to tell him! [*Seizing him by the collar, and threatening him with the horsewhip.*]

Sandy [*rising with half-drunken, half-sober solemnity*]. One minit, miss! one minit! Don't ye! don't ye do that! Ef ye forget (and I don't blame ye for it), ef ye forget that I'm a man, don't ye, don't ye forget that you're a woman! Sit ye down, sit ye down, so! Now, ef ye'll kindly remember, miss, I never saw this yer man, yer lover. Ef ye'll recollect, miss, whenever you met him, I allers hung back and waited round in the Mission or in the fields beyond for ye, and allowed ye to hev your own way, it bein' no business o' mine. Thar isn't a man on the ranch, who, ef he'd had a mind to watch ye, wouldn't hev known more about yer lover than I do.

Jovita [aside]. He speaks truly. He always kept in the background. Even Don Juan never knew that I had an attendant until I told him. [*Aloud.*] I made a mistake, Diego. I was hasty. What am I to do? He is waiting for me even now.

Sandy. Well [*with drunken gravity*], ef ye can't go to him, I reckon it's the squar thing for him to come to ye.

Jovita. Recollect yourself, Diego. Be a man!

Sandy. Thash jus war I say. Let him be a man, and come to ye here. Let him ride up to this ranch like a man, and call out to yer father that he'll take ye jist as ye are, without the land. And if the old man allows, rather than hev ye marry that stranger, he'll give this yer place to the church, why, let him do it, and be damned.

Jovita [recoiling, aside]. So! That is their plan. Don José has worked on the fears or the cupidity of this drunken ingrate.

Sandy [with drunken submission]. Ye was speaking to me, miss. Ef ye'll take my advice,—a drunken man's advice, miss,—ye'll say to that lover of yours, ef he's afeard to come for ye here, to take ye as ye stand, he ain't no man for ye. And, until he does, ye'll do as the ole man says. Fur ef I do say it, miss,—and thar ain't no love lost between us,—he's a good father to ye. It ain't every day that a gal kin afford to swap a father like that, as she *does know*, fur the husband that she *don't*! He's a proud old fool, miss; but to ye, to ye he's clar grit all through.

Jovita [passionately, aside]. Tricked, fooled, like a child! and through the means of this treacherous, drunken tool. [*Stamping her foot.*] Ah! we shall see! You are wise, you are wise, Don José; but your daughter is not a novice, nor a helpless creature of the Holy Church. [*Passionately.*] I'll—I'll become a Protestant to-morrow!

Sandy [unheeding her passion, and becoming more earnest and self-possessed]. Ef ye hed a father, miss, ez instead o'

harkinin' to your slightest wish, and surroundin' ye with luxury, hed made your infancy a struggle for life among strangers, and your childhood a disgrace and a temptation; ef he had left ye with no company but want, with no companions but guilt, with no mother but suffering; ef he had made your home, this home, so unhappy, so vile, so terrible, so awful, that the crowded streets and gutters of a great city was something to fly to for relief; ef he had made his presence, his very name,—your name, miss, allowin' it was your father,—ef he had made that presence so hateful, that name so infamous, that exile, that flyin' to furrin' parts, that wanderin' among strange folks ez didn't know ye, was the only way to make life endurable; and ef he'd given ye,—I mean this good old man Don José, miss,—ef he'd given ye as part of yer heritage a taint, a weakness in yer very blood, a fondness for a poison, a poison that soothed ye like a vampire bat and sucked yer life-blood [*seizing her arm*] ez it soothed ye; ef this curse that hung over ye dragged ye down day by day, till, hating him, loathing him, ye saw yerself day by day becoming more and more like him, till ye knew that his fate was yours, and yours his,—why then, Miss Jovita [*rising with an hysterical, drunken laugh*], why then, I'd run away with ye myself,—I would, damn me!

Jovita [*who has been withdrawing from him scornfully*]. Well acted, Diego. Don José should have seen his pupil. Trust me, my father will reward you. [*Aside.*] And yet there were tears in his drunken eyes. Bah! it is the liquor: he is no longer sane. And, either hypocrite or imbecile, he is to be trusted no longer. But where and why is he going? [*Aloud.*] You are leaving us, Diego.

Sandy [*quietly*]. Well, the old man and me don't get on together.

Jovita [*scornfully*]. Bueno! I see. Then you abandon me?

Sandy [*quickly*]. To the old man, miss,—not the young one. [*Walks to the table, and begins to pour out liquor.*]

Jovita [angrily]. You would not dare to talk to me thus, if John Oakhurst — ah ! [*Checking herself.*]

Sandy [drops glass on table, hurries to centre, and seizes DOÑA JOVITA]. Eh ! Wot ! Wot name did you say ? [*Looks at her amazed and bewildered.*]

Jovita [terrified, aside]. Mother of God ! What have I done ? Broken my sacred pledge to keep his name secret ? No ! No ! Diego did not hear me ! Surely this wretched drunkard does not know him. [*Aloud.*] Nothing. I said nothing : I mentioned no name.

Sandy [still amazed, frightened, and bewildered, passing his hand over his forehead slowly]. Ye mentioned no name ? Surely. I am wild, crazed. Tell me, miss — ye didn't — I know ye didn't, but I thought it sounded like it, — ye didn't mention the name of — of — of — John Oakhurst ?

Jovita [hurriedly]. No, of course not ! You terrify me, Diego. You are wild.

Sandy [dropping her hand with a sigh of relief]. No, no ! In course ye didn't. I was wild, miss, wild ; this drink has confused me yer. [*Pointing to his head.*] There are times when I hear that name, miss, — times when I see his face. [*Sadly.*] But it's when I've took too much — too much. I'll drink no more — no more ! — to-night — to-night ! [*Drops his head slowly in his hands.*]

Jovita [looking at DIEGO — aside]. Really, I'm feeling very uncomfortable. I'd like to ask a question of this maniac. But nonsense ! Don Juan gave me to understand Oakhurst wasn't his real name ; that is, he intimated there was something dreadful and mysterious about it that mustn't be told, — something that would frighten people. *Holy Virgin !* it has ! Why, this reckless vagabond here is pale and agitated. Don Juan shall explain this mystery to-night. But then, how shall I see him ? Ah, I have it. The night of the last *festa*, when I could not leave the rancho, he begged me to show a light from the flat roof of the upper corridor.

that he might know I was thinking of him, — dear fellow! He will linger to-night at the Mission; he will see the light; he will know that I have not forgotten. He will approach the rancho; I shall manage to slip away at midnight to the ruined Mission. I shall — ah, it is my father! Holy Virgin! befriend me now with self-possession. [*Stands quietly at L., looking toward SANDY, who still remains buried in thought, as —*

Enter DON JOSÉ; regards his daughter and DIEGO with a sarcastic smile.

Don José [aside]. Bueno! It is as I expected, — an explanation, an explosion, a lover's quarrel, an end to romance. From his looks I should say she has been teaching the adventurer a lesson. Good! I could embrace her. [*Crosses to SANDY — aloud.*] You still here!

Sandy [rising with a start]. Yes! I — a — I was only taking leave of Miss Jovita, that hez bin kind to me. She's a good gal, ole man, and won't be any the worse when I'm gone. — Good-bye, Miss Jovita [*extending his hand*]: I wish ye luck.

Jovita [coldly]. Adios, friend Diego. [*Aside, hurriedly.*] You will not expose my secret?

Sandy [aside]. It ain't in me, miss. [*To DON JOSÉ, going.*] Adios, ole man. [*Shouldering his pack.*]

Don José. Adios, friend Diego. [*Formally.*] May good luck attend you! [*Aside.*] You understand, on your word as — as — as — a gentleman! — you have no further communication with this rancho, or aught that it contains.

Sandy [gravely]. I hear ye, ole man. Adios. [*Goes to gateway, but pauses at table, and begins to fill a glass of aguardiente.*]

Don José [aside, looking at his daughter]. I could embrace her now. She is truly a Castro. [*Aloud to JOVITA.*] Hark ye, little one! I have news that will please you, and — who

knows?—perhaps break up the monotony of the dull life of the rancho. To-night come to me two famous *caballeros*, *Americaños*, you understand: they will be here soon, even now. Retire, and make ready to receive them. [*Exit JOVITA.*]

Don José [*aside, looking at SANDY*]. He lingers. I shall not be satisfied until Concho has seen him safely beyond the Mission wall.

Enter CONCHO.

Concho. Two *caballeros* have dismounted in the corral, and seek the honour of Don José's presence.

Don José. *Bueno!* [*Aside.*] Follow that fellow beyond the Mission. [*Aloud.*] Admit the strangers. Did they give their names?

Concho. They did, Don José,—Col. Culpepper Starbottle and the Don Alexandro Morton.

Sandy [*dropping glass of aguardiente, and staggering stupidly to the centre, confronting DON JOSÉ and CONCHO, still holding bottle*]. Eh! Wot? Wot name did you say? [*Looks stupidly and amazedly at CONCHO and DON JOSÉ, and then slowly passes his hand over his forehead. Then slowly and apologetically.*] I axes your pardon, Don José, and yours, sir [*to CONCHO*], but I thought ye called me. No!—that ez—I mean—I mean—I'm a little off colour here [*pointing to his head*]. I don't follow suit—I—eh—eh! Oh!—ye'll pardon me, sir, but thar's names—perhaps yer darter will remember that I was took a bit ago on a name—thar's names sorter hangin' round me yer [*pointing to his head*], that I thinks I hear—but bein' drunk—I hopes ye'll excoos me. *Adios.* [*Staggers to gateway, CONCHO following.*]

Concho [*aside*]. There is something more in this than Don José would have known. I'll watch Diego, and keep an eye on Miss Jovita too.

Exit, following SANDY, who, in exit, jostles against COL. STARBOTTLE entering, who stops and leans exhaustedly at the wall to get his breath; following him closely, and oblivious of SANDY MORTON, ALEXANDER MORTON, sen. Enter COL. STARBOTTLE and ALEXANDER MORTON, sen.

SCENE 2. — *The same.*

Col. Starbottle [entering, to DON JOSÉ]. Overlooking the insult of — er — inebricated individual, whose menial position in this — er — er — household precludes a demand for personal satisfaction, sir, I believe I have the honour of addressing Don José Castro. Very good, sir. Permit me, sir, to introduce myself as Col. Culpepper Starbottle — demn me ! the legal adviser of Mr. Alexander Morton, sen., and I may add, sir, the friend of that gentleman, and as such, sir — er — er — personally — personally responsible.

Alexander Morton [puritanically and lugubriously]. As a God-fearing and forgiving Christian, Mr. Castro, I trust you will overlook the habitual profanity of the erring but well-meaning man, who, by the necessities of my situation, accompanies me. I am the person — a helpless sinner — mentioned in the letters which I believe have preceded me. As a professing member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, I have ventured, in the interest of works rather than faith, to overlook the plain doctrines of the church in claiming sympathy of a superstitious Papist.

Starbottle [interrupting, aside to ALEXANDER MORTON]. Ahem ! ahem ! [*Aloud to DON JOSÉ.*] My friend's manner, sir, reminds me of — er — er — Ram Bootgum Sing, first secretary of Turkish legation at Washington in '45 ; most remarkable man — demn me — most remarkable — and warm personal friend. Challenged Tod Robinson for putting him next to Hebrew banker at dinner, with remark — demn me — that they were both believers in the profit ! he, he ! Amusing, perhaps ; irreverent, certainly. Fought with cimeters.

Second pass, Ram divided Tod in two pieces — fact, sir — just here [*pointing*] in — er — er — regions of moral emotions. Upper half called to me, — said to me warningly — last word: — never forget it, — “Star,” — always called me Star, — “Respect man’s religious convictions.” Legs dead; emotion confined to upper part of body — pathetic picture. Ged, sir something to be remembered!

Don José [*with grave Spanish courtesy*]. You are welcome, gentlemen, to the rancho of the Blessed Fisherman. Your letters, with their honourable report are here. Believe me, *señores*, in your modesty you have forgotten to mention your strongest claim to the hospitality of my house, — the royal right of strangers.

Morton. Angels before this have been entertained as strangers, says the Good Book; and that, I take it, is your authority for this ceremoniousness, which else were but lip-service and Papist airs. But I am here in the performance of a duty, Mr. Castro, — the duty of a Christian father. I am seeking a prodigal son. I am seeking him in his wine-husks and among his harl —

Starbottle [*interrupting*]. A single moment. [*To DON JOSÉ.*] Permit me to — er — er — explain. As my friend Mr. Morton states, we are, in fact, at present engaged in — er — er — quest — er — pilgrimage that possibly to some, unless deterred by considerations of responsibility — personal responsibility — sir — Ged, sir, might be looked upon as visionary, enthusiastic, sentimental, fanatical. We are seeking a son, or, as my friend tersely and scripturally expresses it — er — er — prodigal son. I say scripturally, sir, and tersely, but not, you understand it, literally, nor I may add, sir, legally. Ged, sir, as a precedent, I admit we are wrong. To the best of my knowledge, sir, the — er — Prodigal Son sought his own father. To be frank, sir, — and Ged, sir, if Culpepper Starbottle has a fault, it is frankness, sir. As Nelse Buckthorne said to me in Nashville, in ’47, “You would

infer, Col. Starbottle, that I equivocate." I replied, "I do, sir; and permit me to add that equivocation has all the guilt of a lie, with cowardice superadded." The next morning at nine o'clock, Ged, sir, he gasped to me — he was lying on the ground, hole through his left lung just here [*illustrating with DON JOSÉ's coat*], — he gasped, "If you have a merit, Star, above others, it is frankness!" his last words, sir, — demn me. . . . To be frank, sir, years ago, in the wild exuberance of youth, the son of this gentleman left his — er — er — er — boyhood's home, owing to an innocent but natural misunderstanding with the legal protector of his youth —

Morton [interrupting gravely and demurely]. Driven from home by my own sinful and then unregenerate hand —

Starbottle [quickly]. One moment, a simple moment. We will not weary you with — er — er — history, or the vagaries of youth. He — er — came to California in '49. A year ago, touched by — er — er — parental emotion and solicitude, my friend resolved to seek him here. Believing that the — er — er — lawlessness of — er — er — untrammelled youth and boyish inexperience might have led him into some trifling indiscretion, we have sought him successively in hospitals, almshouses, reformatories, State's prisons, lunatic and inebriate asylums, and — er — er — even on the monumental inscriptions of the — er — er — country churchyards. We have thus far, I grieve to say, although acquiring much and valuable information of a varied character and interest, as far as the direct matter of our search, — we have been, I think I may say, unsuccessful. Our search has been attended with the — er — disbursement of some capital under my — er — er — direction, which, though large, represents quite inadequately the — er — er — earnestness of our endeavours.

Enter MANUELA.

Manuela [to DON JOSÉ]. The Dona Jovita is waiting to receive you.

Don José [to MORTON]. You shall tell me further of your interesting pilgrimage hereafter. At present my daughter awaits us to place this humble roof at your disposal. I am a widower, Don Alexandro, like yourself. When I say that, like you, I have an only child, and that I love her, you will understand how earnest is my sympathy. This way, gentlemen. [*Leading to door in corridor, and awaiting them.*]

Starbottle [*aside*]. Umph! an interview with lovely woman means—er—intoxication, but—er—er—no liquor. It's evident that the Don doesn't drink. Eh! [*Catches sight of table in corridor, and bottle.*] Oh, he does, but some absurd Spanish formality prevents his doing the polite thing before dinner. [*Aloud, to DON JOSÉ.*] One moment, sir, one moment. If you will—er—er—pardon the—er—seeming discourtesy, for which I am, I admit—er—personally responsible, I will for a few moments enjoy the—er—er—delicious air of the courtyard, and the beauties of Nature as displayed in the—er—sunset. I will—er—rejoin you and the—er—er—ladies a moment later.

Don José. The house is your own, señor: do as you will. This way, Don Alexandro.

[*Exit, in door L., DON JOSÉ and MORTON, sen.*]

Starbottle. "Do as you will." Well, I don't understand Spanish ceremony, but that's certainly good English. [*Going to table.*] Eh! [*Smelling decanter.*] Robinson-County whisky! Umph! I have observed that the spirit of American institutions, sir, is already penetrating the—er—er—superstitions of—er—foreign and effete civilizations. [*Pours out glass of whisky, and drinks; pours again, and observes MANUELA watching him respectfully.*] What the Devil is that girl looking at Eh! [*Puts down glass.*]

Manuela [*aside*]. He is fierce and warlike. Mother of God! But he is not so awful as that gray-haired *caballero*, who looks like a fasting St. Anthony. And he loves *aguar-*

diente : he will pity poor Diego the more. [*Aloud.*] Ahem *Señor*. [*Courtesies coquettishly.*]

Col. Starbottle [*aside*]. Oh, I see. Ged ! not a bad-looking girl,—a trifle dark, but Southern, and—er—tropical. Ged, Star, Star, this won't do, sir ; no, sir. The filial affections of *Æneas* are not to be sacrificed through the blandishments of—er—Dodo—I mean a Dido.

Manuela. O *señor*, you are kind, you are good ! You are an *Americano*, one of a great nation. You will feel sympathy for a poor young man,—a mere *muchaco*,—one of your own race, who was a *vaquero* here, *señor*. He has been sent away from us here, disgraced, alone, hungry, perhaps penniless. [*Wipes her eyes.*]

Col. Starbottle. The Devil ! Another prodigal. [*Aloud.*] My dear, the case you have just stated would appear to be the—er—er—normal condition of the—er—youth of America. But why was he discharged ? [*Pouring out liquor.*]

Manuela [*demurely glancing at the colonel*]. He was drunk, *señor*.

Starbottle [*potently*]. Drunkenness, my child, which is—er—weakness in the—er—er—gentleman, in the subordinate is a crime. What—er—excites the social impulse and exhilarates the fancy of the—er—master of the house, in the performance of his duty, renders the servant unfit for his. Legally it is a breach of contract. I should give it as my opinion,—for which I am personally responsible,—that your friend Diego could not recover. Ged ! [*Aside.*] I wonder if this scapegoat could be our black sheep.

Manuela. But that was not all, *señor*. It was an excuse only. He was sent away for helping our young lady to a cavalier. He was discharged because he would not be a traitor to her. He was sent away because he was too good, too honourable,—too—[*Bursts out crying.*]

Starbottle [*aside*]. Oh, the Devil ! *this* is no Sandy Morton. [*Coming forward gravely.*] I have never yet analyzed

the—er—er—character of the young gentleman I have the honour to assist in restoring to his family and society ; but judging—er—calmly—er—dispassionately, my knowledge of his own father—from what the old gentleman must have been in his unregenerate state, and knowing what he is now in his present reformed Christian condition, I should say calmly and deliberately that the son must be the most infernal and accomplished villain unhung. Ged, I have a thought, an inspiration. [*To MANUELA, tapping her under the chin.*] I see, my dear ; a lover, ha, ha ! Ah, you rogue ! Well, well, we will talk of this again. I will—er—er—interest myself in this Diego. [*Exit MANUELA.*]

Starbottle [*solus*]. How would it do to get up a prodigal ? Umph. Something must be done soon : the old man grows languid in his search. My position as a sinecure is—er—in peril. A prodigal ready-made ! But could I get a scoundrel bad enough to satisfy the old man ? Ged, that's serious. Let me see : he admits that he is unable to recognize his own son in face, features, manner, or speech. Good ! If I could pick up some rascal whose—er—irregularities didn't quite fill the bill, and could say—Ged!—that he was reforming. Reforming ! Ged, Star ! That very defect would show the hereditary taint, demn me ! I must think of this seriously. Ged, Star ! the idea is—an inspiration of humanity and virtue. Who knows ? it might be the saving of the vagabond,—a crown of glory to the old man's age. Inspiration, did I say ? Ged, Star, it's a *duty*,—a sacred, solemn duty, for which you are responsible,—personally responsible.

Lights down half. Enter from corridor L., MORTON,
DON JOSÉ, the DOÑA JOVITA, and MANUELA.

Doña Jovita [*stepping forward with exaggerated Spanish courtesy*]. A thousand graces await your Excellency, Commander Don—Don—

Starbottle [*bowing to the ground with equal delight and exaggerated courtesy*]. Er—Coolpepero !

Doña Jovita. Don Culpepero! If we throw ourselves unasked at your Excellency's feet [*courtesy*], if we appear unsought before the light of your Excellency's eyes [*courtesy*], if we err in maidenly decorum in thus seeking unbidden your Excellency's presence [*courtesy*], believe us, it is the fear of some greater, some graver indecorum in our conduct that has withdrawn your Excellency's person from us since you have graced our roof with your company. We know, Señor Commander, how superior are the charms of the American ladies. It is in no spirit of rivalry with them, but to show—Mother of God!—that we are not absolutely ugly, that we intrude upon your Excellency's solitude. [*Aside.*] I shall need the old fool, and shall use him.

Col. Starbottle [*who has been bowing and saluting with equal extravagance, during this speech—aside*]. Ged! she is beautiful! [*Aloud.*] Permit me—er—er—Doña Jovita, to correct—Ged, I must say it! correct erroneous statements. The man who should—er—utter in my presence remarks disparaging those—er—charms it is my privilege to behold, I should hold responsible,—Ged! personally responsible. You—er—remind me of—er—incident, trifling perhaps, but pleasing, Charleston in '52,—a reception at John C. Calhoun's. A lady, one of the demnedest beautiful women you ever saw, said to me, "Star!"—she always called me Star,—“you've avoided me, you have, Star! I fear you are no longer my friend.”—“Your friend, madam?” I said. “No, I've avoided you because I am your lover.” Ged, Miss Jovita, a fact—demn me! Sensation. Husband heard garbled report. He was old friend, but jealous, rash, indiscreet. Fell at first fire—umph—January 5th. Lady—beautiful woman—never forgave: went into convent. Sad affair. And all a mistake—demn me,—all a mistake, through perhaps extravagant gallantry and compliment. I lingered here, oblivious perhaps of—er—beauty, in the enjoyment of Nature

Doña Jovita. Is there enough for your Excellency to share with me, since it must be my rival? See, the fog is clearing away : we shall have moonlight. [DON JOSÉ and MORTON *seat themselves at table.*] Shall we not let these venerable *caballeros* enjoy their confidences and experiences together? [*Aside.*] Don José watches me like a fox, does not intend to lose sight of me. How shall I show the light three times from the courtyard roof? I have it ! [*Takes STARBOTTLE'S arm.*] It is too pleasant to withdraw. There is a view from the courtyard wall your Excellency should see. Will you accompany me? The ascent is easy.

Starbottle [bowing]. I will ascend, although, permit me to say, Doña Jovita, it would be—er—impossible for me to be nearer—er—heaven, than—er—at present.

Doña Jovita. Flatterer! Come, you shall tell me about this sad lady who died. Ah, Don Culpepero, let me hope all your experiences will not be so fatal to us ! [*Exeunt DOÑA JOVITA and STARBOTTLE.*]

Morton [aside]. A froward daughter of Baal, and, if I mistake not, even now concocting mischief for this foolish, indulgent, stiff-necked father. [*Aloud.*] Your only daughter, I presume.

Don José. My darling, Don Alexandro. Motherless from her infancy. A little wild, and inclined to gaiety, but I hope not seeking for more than these walls afford. I have checked her but seldom, Don Alexandro, and then I did not let her see my hand on the rein that held her back. I do not ask her confidence always : I only want her to know that when the time comes it can be given to me without fear.

Morton. Umph !

Don José [leaning forward confidentially]. To show that you have not intrusted your confidence regarding your wayward son—whom may the saints return to you!—to unsympathetic or inexperienced ears, I will impart a secret

A few weeks ago I detected an innocent intimacy between this foolish girl and a vagabond *vaquero* in my employ. You understand, it was on her part romantic, visionary ; on his, calculating, shrewd, self-interested, for he expected to become my heir. I did not lock her up. I did not tax her with it. I humoured it. To-day I satisfied the lover that his investment was not profitable, that a marriage without my consent entailed the loss of the property, and then left them together. They parted in tears, think you, Don Alexandro ? No, but mutually hating each other. The romance was over. An American would have opposed the girl, have driven her to secrecy, to an elopement perhaps. Eh ?

Morton [*scornfully*]. And you believe that they have abandoned their plans ?

Don José.—I am sure—hush ! she is here !

Enter, on roof of corridor, STARBOTTLE and JOVITA.

Col. Starbottle. Really, a superb landscape ! An admirable view of the—er—fog—rolling over the Mission Hills, the plains below, and the—er—er—single figure of—er—motionless horseman——

Doña Jovita [*quickly*]. Some belated *vaquero*. Do you smoke, Señor Commander ?

Starbottle. At times.

Doña Jovita. With me. I will light a cigarette for you : it is the custom.

COL. STARBOTTLE *draws match from his pocket, and is about to light, but is stopped by DOÑA JOVITA.*

Doña Jovita. Pardon, your Excellency, but we cannot endure your American matches. There is a taper in the passage.

COL. STARBOTTLE *brings taper : DOÑA JOVITA turns to light cigarette, but manages to blow out candle.*

Doña Jovita. I must try your gallantry again. That is once I have failed. [*Significantly.*]

COL. STARBOTTLE *relights candle, business, same results.*

Doña Jovita. I am stupid and nervous to-night. I have failed twice. [*With emphasis.*]

COL. STARBOTTLE *repeats business with candle.* DOÑA JOVITA *lights cigarette, hands it to the colonel.*

Doña Jovita. Thrice, and I have succeeded. [*Blows out candle.*]

Col. Starbottle. A thousand thanks! There is a—er—er—light on the plain.

Doña Jovita [*hastily*]. It is the *vaqueros* returning. My father gives a *festa* to peons in honour of your arrival. There will be a dance. You have been patient, Señor Commander: you shall have my hand for a waltz.

Enter vaqueros, their wives and daughters. A dance, during which the "sembi eanca" is danced by COL. STARBOTTLE and DOÑA JOVITA. Business, during which the bell of Mission Church, faintly illuminated beyond the wall, strikes twelve. Dancers withdraw hurriedly, leaving alone MANUELA, DOÑA JOVITA, COL. STARBOTTLE, DON JOSÉ, and CONCHO. CONCHO formally hands keys to DON JOSÉ.

Don José [*delivering keys to MORTON with stately impressiveness*]. Take them, Don Alexandro Morton, and with them all that they unlock for bliss or bale. Take them, noble guest, and with them the homage of this family,—to-night, Don Alexandro, your humble servants. Good-night, gentlemen. May a thousand angels attend you, O Don Alexandro and Don Culpepero!

Doña Jovita. Good-night, Don Alexandro. May your dreams to-night see all your wishes fulfilled! Good-night, O Señor Commander. May she you dream of be as happy as you!

Manuela and Concho [*together*]. Good-night, O señores and illustrious gentlemen! May the Blessed Fisherman

watch over you ! *Both parties retreat into opposite corridors, bowing.*]

MANUELA.

CONCHO.

MORTON.

DON JOSÉ.

JOVITA.

STARBOTTLE.

SCENE 3. — *The same. Stage darkened. Fog passing beyond wall outside, and occasionally obscuring moonlit landscape beyond. Enter JOVITA softly, from corridor L. Her face is partly hidden by Spanish mantilla.*

Jovita. All quiet at last ; and, thanks to much *aguardiente* my warlike admirer snores peacefully above. Yet I could swear I heard the old Puritan's door creak as I descended ! Pshaw ! What matters ! [*Goes to gateway, and tries gate.*] Locked ! *Carramba !* I see it now. Under the pretext of reviving the old ceremony, Don José has locked the gates, and placed me in the custody of his guest. Stay ! There is a door leading to the corral from the passage by Concho's room. *Bueno !* Don José shall see ! [*Exit R.*]

Enter cautiously R. OLD MORTON.

Old Morton. I was not mistaken ! It was the skirt of that Jezebel daughter that whisked past my door a moment ago, and her figure that flitted down that corridor. So ! The lover driven out of the house at four P.M., and at twelve o'clock at night the young lady trying the gate secretly. This may be Spanish resignation and filial submission, but it looks very like Yankee disobedience and forwardness. Perhaps it's well that the keys are in my pocket. This fond confiding Papist may find the heretic American father of some service. [*Conceals himself behind pillar of corridor.*]

After a pause the head of JOHN OAKHURST appears over the wall of corridor : he climbs up to roof of corridor, and descends very quietly and deliberately to stage.

Oakhurst [dusting his clothing with his handkerchief].

I never knew before why these Spaniards covered their adobe walls with whitewash. [*Leans against pillar in shadow.*]

Re-enter JOVITA, hastily.

Jovita. All is lost ; the corral door is locked ; the key is outside, and Concho is gone, — gone where? *Madre de Dios!* to discover, perhaps to kill him.

Oakhurst [*approaching her*]. No.

Jovita. Juan! [*Embracing him.*] But how did you get here? This is madness!

Oakhurst. As you did not come to the Mission, I came to the rancho. I found the gate locked — by the way, is not that a novelty here? — I climbed the wall. But you, Miss Castro, you are trembling! Your little hands are cold!

Jovita [*glancing around*]. Nothing, nothing! But you are running a terrible risk. At any moment we may be discovered.

Oakhurst. I understand you: it would be bad for the discoverer. Never fear, I will be patient.

Jovita. But I feared that you might meet Concho.

Oakhurst. Concho — Concho — [*meditatively*]. Let me see, — tall, dark, long in the arm, weighs about one hundred and eighty, and active.

Jovita. Yes; tell me! You have met him?

Oakhurst. Possibly, possibly. Was he a friend of yours?

Jovita. No!

Oakhurst. That's better. Are his pursuits here sedentary, or active?

Jovita. He is my father's *major-domo*.

Oakhurst. I see: a sinecure. [*Aside.*] Well, if he has to lay up for a week or two, the rancho won't suffer.

Jovita. Well?

Oakhurst. Well!

Jovita [*passionately*]. There, having scaled the wall, at the risk of being discovered — this is all you have to say! [*Turning away.*]

Oakhurst [quietly]. Perhaps, *Jovita* [taking her hand with grave earnestness], to a clandestine intimacy like ours there is but one end. It is not merely elopement, not merely marriage, it is exposure ! Sooner or later you and I must face the eyes we now shun. What matters if to-night or later ?

Jovita [quickly]. I am ready. It was you who —

Oakhurst. It was I who first demanded secrecy ; but it was I who told you when we last met that I would tell you why to-night.

Jovita. I am ready ; but hear me, Juan, nothing can change my faith in you !

Oakhurst [sadly]. You know not what you say. Listen, my child. I am a gambler. Not the man who lavishes his fortune at the gaming-table for excitement's sake ; not the fanatic who stakes his own earnings—perhaps the confided earnings of others—on a single *coup*. No, he is the man who loses,—whom the world deplures, pities, and forgives. I am the man who wins — whom the world hates and despises.

Jovita. I do not understand you, Juan.

Oakhurst. So much the better, perhaps. But you must hear me. I make a profession—an occupation more exacting, more wearying, more laborious, than that of your meanest herdsman—of that which others make a dissipation of the senses. And yet, *Jovita*, there is not the meanest *vaquero* in this ranch, who, playing against me, winning or losing, is not held to be my superior. I have no friends—only confederates. Even the woman who dares to pity me must do it in secret.

Jovita. But you will abandon this dreadful trade. As the son of the rich Don José, no one dare scorn you. My father will relent. I am his heiress.

Oakhurst. No more, *Jovita*, no more. If I were the man who could purchase the world's respect through a woman's

weakness for him, I should not be here to-night. I am not here to sue your father's daughter with hopes of forgiveness, promises of reformation. Reformation, in a man like me, means cowardice or self-interest. [OLD MORTON, *becoming excited, leans slowly out from the shadow of the pillar, listening intently.*] I am here to take, by force if necessary, a gambler's wife,—the woman who will share my fortunes, my disgrace, my losses ; who is willing to leave her old life of indulgence, of luxury, of respectability, for mine. You are frightened, little dove : compose yourself [*soothing her tenderly and sadly*] ; you are frightened at the cruel hawk who has chosen you for a mate.

Old Morton [aside]. God in heaven ! This is like HIM ! like me !—like me, before the blessed Lord lifted me into regeneration. If it should be ! [*Leans forward anxiously from pillar.*]

Oakhurst [aside]. Still silent ! Poor dove, I can hear her foolish heart flutter against mine. Another moment decides our fate. Another moment : John Oakhurst and freedom, or Red Gulch and—she is moving. [*To JOVITA.*] I am harsh, little one, and cold. Perhaps I have had much to make me so. But when [*with feeling*] I first met you ; when, lifting my eyes to the church-porch, I saw your beautiful face ; when, in sheer recklessness and bravado, I raised my hat to you ; when you—you, Jovita—lifted your brave eyes to mine, and there, there in the sanctuary, returned my salute,—the salutation of the gambler, the outcast, the reprobate,—then, then I swore that you should be mine, if I tore you from the sanctuary. Speak now, Jovita : if it was coquetry, speak now — I forgive you ; if it was sheer wantonness, speak now — I shall spare you ; but if—

Jovita [throwing herself in his arms]. Love, Juan ! I am yours, now and forever. [*Pause.*] But you have not told me all. I will go with you to-night—now. I leave behind me all,—my home, my father, my—[*pause*] my name. You

have forgotten, Juan, you have not told me what I change *that* for : you have not told me *yours*.

OLD MORTON, *in eager excitement, leans beyond shadow of pillar.*

Oakhurst [*embracing her tenderly, with a smile*]. If I have not told you who I am, it was because, darling, it was more important that you should know what I am. Now that you know that—why—[*embarrassedly*] I have nothing more to tell. I did not wish you to repeat the name of Oakhurst—because—[*aside*] how the Devil shall I tell her that Oakhurst was my real name, after all, and that I only feared she might divulge it?—[*aloud*] because—because—[*determinedly*] I doubted your ability to keep a secret. My real name is—[*looks up, and sees MORTON leaning beyond pillar*] is a secret. [*Pause, in which OAKHURST slowly recovers his coolness.*] It will be given to the good priest who to-night joins our fate forever, Jovita,—forever, in spite of calumny, opposition, or *spies* ! the *padre* whom we shall reach, if enough life remains in your pulse and mine to clasp these hands together. [*After a pause.*] Are you content ?

Jovita. I am.

Oakhurst. Then there is not a moment to lose. Retire, and prepare yourself for a journey. I will wait here.

Jovita. I am ready now.

Oakhurst [*looking toward pillar*]. Pardon, my darling : there was a bracelet—a mere trifle—I once gave you. It is not on your wrist. I am a trifle superstitious, perhaps : it was my first gift. Bring it with you. I will wait. Go !

[*Exit JOVITA.*

OAKHURST *watches her exit, lounges indifferently toward gate ; when opposite pillar, suddenly seizes MORTON by the throat, and drags him noiselessly to centre.*

Oakhurst [*hurriedly*]. One outcry,—a single word,—and it is your last. I care not who *you* may be !—who I am,—

you have heard enough to know, at least, that you are in the grip of a desperate man. [*Keys fall from MORTON'S hand. OAKHURST seizes them.*] Silence ! on your life.

Morton [*struggling*]. You would not dare ! I command you—

Oakhurst [*dragging him to gateway*]. Out you must go.

Morton. Stop, I command you. I never turned *my* father out of doors !

Oakhurst [*gazing at MORTON*]. It is an *old* man ! I release you. Do as you will, only remember that that girl is mine forever, that there is no power on earth will keep me from her.

Morton. On conditions.

Oakhurst. Who are you that make conditions ? You are not—her father ?

Morton. No, but I am *yours* ! Alexander Morton, I charge you to hear me.

Oakhurst [*starting in astonishment ; aside*]. Sandy Morton, my lost partner's father ! This is fate.

Morton. You are astonished ; but I thought so. Aye, you will hear me now ! I am your father, Alexander Morton, who drove you, a helpless boy, into disgrace and misery. I know your shameless life : for twenty years it was mine, and worse, until, by the grace of God, I reformed, as you shall. I have stopped you in a disgraceful act. Your mother—God forgive me !—left *her* house, for *my* arms, as wickedly, as wantonly, as shamelessly—

Oakhurst. Stop, old man ! Stop ! Another word [*seizing him*], and I may forget your years.

Morton. But not your blood. No, Alexander Morton, I have come thousands of miles for one sacred purpose,—to save you ; and I shall, with God's will, do it now. Be it so, on one condition. You shall have this girl ; but lawfully, openly, with the sanction of Heaven and your parents.

Oakhurst [*aside*]. I see a ray of hope. This is Sandy's

father ; the cold, insensate brute, who drove him into exile, the one bitter memory of his life. Sandy disappeared, irreclaimable, or living alone, hating irrevocably the author of his misery ; why should not I —

Morton [continuing]. On one condition. Hear me, Alexander Morton. If within a year, you, abandoning your evil practices, your wayward life, seek to reform beneath my roof, I will make this proud Spanish Don glad to accept you as the more than equal of his daughter.

Oakhurst [aside]. It would be an easy deception. Sandy has given me the details of his early life. At least, before the imposition was discovered I shall be — [*Aloud.*] I — I — [*Aside.*] Perdition ! *she* is coming ! There is a light moving in the upper chamber. Don José is awakened. [*Aloud.*] I — I — accept.

Morton. It is well. Take these keys, open yonder gate, and fly ! [*As OAKHURST hesitates.*] Obey me. I will meet your sweetheart, and explain all. You will come here at daylight in the morning, and claim admittance, not as a vagabond, a housebreaker, but as my son. You hesitate Alexander Morton, I, your father, command you. Go !

OAKHURST goes to the gate, opens it, as the sound of DIEGO's voice, singing in the fog, comes faintly in.

O yer's your Sandy Morton,

Drink him down !

O yer's your Sandy Morton,

Drink him down !

O yer's your Sandy Morton,

For he's drunk, and goin' a-courlin'.

O yer's your Sandy Morton,

Drink him down !

OAKHURST recoils against gate, MORTON hesitates, as window in corridor opens, and DON JOSÉ calls from upper corridor.

Don José. Concho ! [*Pause.*] 'Tis that vagabond Diego,

lost his way in the fog. Strange that Concho should have overlooked him. I will descend.

Morton [to OAKHURST]. Do you hear?

Exit OAKHURST *through gateway.* MORTON *closes gate, and returns to centre.* *Enter* JOVITA *hurriedly.*

Jovita. I have it here. Quick ! there is a light in Don José's chamber ; my father is coming down. [*Sees* MORTON, *and screams.*]

Morton [*seizing her*]. Hush ! for your own sake ; for *his* ; control yourself. He is gone, but he will return. [*To* JOVITA, *still struggling.*] Hush, I beg, Miss Jovita. I beg, I command you, my daughter. Hush !

Jovita [*whispering*]. His voice has changed. What does this mean ? [*Aloud.*] Where has he gone ? and why are you here ?

Morton [*slowly and seriously*]. He has left me here to answer the unanswered question you asked him. [*Enter* DON JOSÉ *and* COL. STARBOTTLE, R. *and* L.] I am here to tell you that I am his father, and that he is Alexander Morton.

TABLEAUX.

Curtain.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Red Gulch. Cañon of river, and distant view of Sierras, snow-ravined. Schoolhouse of logs in right middle distance. Ledge of rocks in centre. On steps of schoolhouse two large bunches of flowers. Enter STARBOTTLE, slowly climbing rocks L., panting and exhausted. Seats himself on rock, foreground, and wipes his face with his pocket-handkerchief.*

Starbottle. This is evidently the — er — locality. Here are the — er — groves of Academus — the heights of — er — Ida ! I should say that the unwillingness which the — er — divine Shakespeare points out in the — er — “ whining schoolboy ” is intensified in — er — climbing this height, and the — er — alacrity of his departure must be in exact ratio to his gravitation. Good idea. Ged ! say it to schoolma’am. Wonder what she’s like ? Humph ! the usual thin, weazened, hatchet-faced Yankee spinster, with an indecent familiarity with Webster’s Dictionary ! And this is the woman, Star, you’re expected to discover, and bring back to affluence and plenty. This is the new fanaticism of Mr. Alexander Morton, sen. Ged ! not satisfied with dragging his prodigal son out of merited obscurity, this miserable old lunatic commissions *me* to hunt up another of his abused relatives ; some forty-fifth cousin, whose mother he had frozen, beaten, or starved to death ! And all this to please his prodigal ! Ged ! if that prodigal hadn’t presented himself that morning, I’d have picked up — er — some — er — reduced gentleman — Ged that knew how to spend the old man’s money to better advantage. [*Musing.*] If this schoolmistress were barely good-looking, Star, — and she’s sure to have fifty thousand

from the old man — Ged, you might get even with Alexander, sen., for betrothing his prodigal to Doña Jovita, in spite of the — er — evident preference that the girl showed for you. Capital idea! If she's not positively hideous I'll do it! Ged! I'll reconnoitre first! [*Musing.*] I could stand one eye; yes — er — single eye would not be positively objectionable in the — er — present experiments of science toward the — er — the substitution of glass. Red hair, Star, is — er — Venetian, — the beauty of Giorgione. [*Goes up to schoolhouse window, and looks in.*] Too early! Seven empty benches; seven desks splashed with ink. The — er — rostrum of the awful Minerva empty, but — er — adorned with flowers, nose-gays — demn me! And here, here on the — er — very threshold [*looking down*], floral tributes. The — er — conceit of these New England schoolma'ams, and their — er — evident Jesuitical influence over the young, is fraught, sir, fraught with — er — darkly political significance. Eh, Ged! There's a caricature on the blackboard. [*Laughing.*] Ha, ha! Absurd chalk outline of ridiculous fat person. Evidently the schoolma'am's admirer. Ged! immensely funny! Ah! boys will be boys. Like you, Star, just like you, — always up to tricks like that. A sentence scrawled below the figure seems to be — er — explanation. Hem! [*Takes out eyeglass.*] Let's see [*reading*]. "This is old" — old — er — old — demme, sir! — "Starbottle!" This is infamous. I haven't been forty-eight hours in the place, and to my certain knowledge haven't spoken to a child. Ged, sir, it's the — er — posting of a libel! The woman, the — er — female, who permits this kind of thing, should be made responsible — er — personally responsible. Eh, hush! What have we here? [*Retires to ledge of rocks.*]

Enter MISS MARY L., reading letter.

Miss Mary. Strange! Is it all a dream? No! here are the familiar rocks, the distant snow-peaks, the schoolhouse

the spring below. An hour ago I was the poor schoolmistress of Red Gulch, with no ambition nor hope beyond this mountain wall ; and now — oh, it must be a dream ! But here is the letter. Certainly this is no delusion : it is too plain, formal, business-like. [*Reads.*]

MY DEAR COUSIN, — I address the only surviving child of my cousin Mary and her husband John Morris, both deceased. It is my duty as a Christian relative to provide you with a home, — to share with you that wealth and those blessings that a kind Providence has vouchsafed me. I am aware that my conduct to your father and mother, while in my sinful and unregenerate state, is no warrantee for my present promise ; but my legal adviser, Col. Starbottle, who is empowered to treat with you, will assure you of the sincerity of my intention, and my legal ability to perform it. He will conduct you to my house ; you will share it's roof with me and my prodigal son Alexander, now by the grace of God restored, and mindful of the error of his ways. I enclose a draft for one thousand dollars : if you require more, draw upon me for the same.

Your cousin,

ALEXANDER MORTON, SEN.

My mother's cousin — so ! Cousin Alexander ! a rich man, and re-united to the son ne drove into shameful exile. Well ! we will see this confidential lawyer ; and until then — until then — why, we are the schoolmistress of Red Gulch and responsible for its youthful prodigals. [*Going to school-house door.*]

Miss Mary [stopping to examine flowers]. Poor, poor Sandy ! Another offering, and, as he fondly believes, unknown and anonymous ! As if he were not visible in every petal and leaf ! The *mariposa* blossom of the plain. The snow-flower I longed for, from those cool snowdrifts beyond

the ridge. And I really believe he was sober when he arranged them. Poor fellow! I begin to think that the dissipated portion of this community are the most interesting. Ah! some one behind the rock,—Sandy, I'll wager. No! a stranger!

Col. Starbottle [aside, and advancing]. If I could make her think I left those flowers! [*Aloud.*] When I state that—er—I am perhaps—er—stranger—

Miss Mary [interrupting him coldly]. You explain, sir, your appearance on a spot which the rude courtesy of even this rude miner's camp has preserved from intrusion.

Starbottle [slightly abashed, but recovering himself]. Yes—Ged!—that is, I—er—saw you admiring—er—tribute—er—humble tribute of flowers. I am myself passionately devoted to flowers. Ged! I've spent hours—in—er—bending over the—er—graceful sunflower, in—er—plucking the timid violet from the overhanging but reluctant bough, in collecting the—er—er—*fauna*—I mean the—er—*flora*—of this—er—district.

Miss Mary [who has been regarding him intently]. Permit me to leave you in uninterrupted admiration of them [*Handing him flowers.*] You will have ample time in your journey down the gulch to indulge your *curiosity*!

HANDS STARBOTTLE flowers, enters schoolhouse, and quietly closes door on STARBOTTLE as SANDY MORTON enters cautiously and sheepishly from left. SANDY stops in astonishment on observing STARBOTTLE, and remains by wing left.

Starbottle [smelling flowers, and not noticing MISS MARY'S absence]. Beautiful—er—exquisite. [*Looking up at closed door.*] Ged! Most extraordinary disappearance! [*Looks round, and discovers SANDY; examines him for a moment through his eyeglass, and then, after a pause, inflates his chest, turns his back on SANDY, and advances to schoolhouse*

door. SANDY comes quickly, and, as Starbottle raises his cane to rap on door, seizes his arm. Both men, regarding each other fixedly, holding each other, retreat slowly and cautiously to centre. Then STARBOTTLE disengages his arm.]

Sandy [embarrassedly but determinedly]. Look yer, stranger. By the rules of this camp, this place is sacred to the schoolma'am and her children.

Starbottle [with lofty severity]. It is ! Then—er—permit me to ask, sir, what *you* are doing here.

Sandy [embarrassed, and dropping his head in confusion]. I was—passing. There is no school to-day.

Starbottle. Then, sir, Gcd ! permit me to—er—demand—demand, sir—an apology. You have laid, sir, your hand upon my person—demn me ! Not the first time, sir, either ; for, if I am not mistaken, you are the—er—inebriated menial, sir, who two months ago jostled me, sir,—demn me,—as I entered the rancho of my friend Don José Castro.

Sandy [starting, aside]. Don José ! [Aloud.] Hush, hush ! She will hear you. No—that is—[stops, confused and embarrassed. Aside.] She will hear of my disgrace. He will tell her the whole story.

Starbottle. I shall await your apology one hour. At the end of that time, if it is not forthcoming, I shall—er—er—waive your menial antecedents, and expect the—er—satisfaction of a gentleman. Good-morning, sir. [Turns to schoolhouse.]

Sandy. No, no : you shall not go !

Starbottle. Who will prevent me ?

Sandy [grappling him]. I will. [Appealingly.] Look yer, stranger, don't provoke me, I, a desperate man, desperate and crazed with drink,—don't ye, don't ye do it ! For God's sake, take your hands off me ! Ye don't know what ye do. Ah ! [Wildly, holding STARBOTTLE firmly, and forcing him backward to precipice beyond ledge of rocks.] Hear me. Three years ago, in a moment like

his, I dragged a man — my friend — to this precipice. I —
—no! no! — don't anger me now! [SANDY'S *grip on*
STARBOTTLE *relaxes slightly, and his head droops.*]

Starbottle [*coolly*]. Permit me to remark, sir, that any
eminiscence of your — er — friend — or any other man is —
er — at this moment, irrelevant and impertinent. Permit me
to point out the — er — fact, sir, that your hand is pressing
heavily, demned heavily, on my shoulder.

Sandy [*fiercely*]. You shall not go!

Starbottle [*fiercely*]. Shall not?

Struggle. STARBOTTLE *draws derringer from his breast-*
pocket, and SANDY seizes his arm. In this position both
parties struggle to ledge of rocks, and COL. STARBOTTLE is
forced partly over.

Miss Mary [*opening schoolhouse door*]. I thought I heard
voices. [*Looking toward ledge of rocks, where COL. STAR-*
BOTTLE and SANDY are partly hidden by trees. Both men
relax grasp of each other at MISS MARY'S voice.]

Col. Starbottle [*aloud and with voice slightly raised, to*
SANDY]. By — er — leaning over this way a moment, a
single moment, you will — er — perceive the trail I speak of.
It follows the cañon to the right. It will bring you to — er
— the settlement in an hour. [*To MISS MARY, as if observ-*
ing her for the first time.] I believe I am — er — right; but,
being — er — more familiar with the locality, you can direct
the gentleman better.

SANDY *slowly sinks on his knees beside rock, with his face*
averted from schoolhouse, as COL. STARBOTTLE disengages
himself, and advances jauntily and gallantly to schoolhouse.

Col. Starbottle. In — er — er — showing the stranger the
— er — way, I perhaps interrupted our interview. The — er
— observances of — er — civility and humanity must not be
foregone, even for — er — the ladies. I — er — believe I

address Miss Mary Morris. When I — er — state that my name is Col. Starbottle, charged on mission of — er — delicate nature, I believe I — er — explain *my* intrusion.

MISS MARY *bows, and motions to schoolhouse door*; COL. STARBOTTLE, *bowing deeply, enters*; but MISS MARY *remains standing by door, looking toward trees that hide SANDY.*

Miss Mary [aside]. I am sure it was Sandy's voice ! But why does he conceal himself?

Sandy [aside, rising slowly to his feet, with his back to schoolhouse door]. Even this conceited bully overcomes me, and shames me with his readiness and tact. He was quick to spare her — a stranger — the spectacle of two angry men. I — I — must needs wrangle before her very door ! Well, vell ! better out of her sight forever, than an object of pity or terror. [*Exit slowly, and with downcast eyes, right.*]

Miss Mary [watching the trail]. It was Sandy ! and this concealment means something more than bashfulness. Perhaps the stranger can explain. [*Enters schoolhouse, and closes door.*]

SCENE 2. — *The same* Enter CONCHO, lame, cautiously, from R. Pauses at R., and then beckons to HOP SING, who follows R.

Concho [impatiently]. Well ! you saw him?

Hop Sing. Me see him.

Concho. And you recognized him ?

Hop Sing. No shabe likoquize.

Concho [furiously]. You knew him, eh ? *Carramba !* You knew him ?

Hop Sing [slowly and sententiously]. Me shabe man you callee Diego. Me shabbee Led Gulchee callee Sandy. Me shabbee man Poker Flat callee Alexandlee Molton. Allee same, John ! Allee same !

Concho [rubbing his hands]. *Bueno !* Good John ! good

John ! And you knew he was called Alexander Morton ? And go on — good John — go on !

Hop Sing. Me plentee washee shirtee — Melican man Poker Flat. Me plentee washee shirt Alexandlee Molton. Always litee, litee on shirt allee time. [*Pointing to tail of his blouse, and imitating writing with finger.*] Alexandlee Molton. Melican man tellee me—shirt say Alexandlee Molton —shabbee ?

Concho. *Bueno !* Excellent John. Good John. His linen marked Alexander Morton. The proofs are gathering ! [*crosses to c.*] — the letter I found in his pack, addressed to Alexander Morton, Poker Flat, which first put me on his track ; the story of his wife's infidelity, and her flight with his partner to Red Gulch, the quarrel and fight that separated them, his flight to San José, his wanderings to the Mission of San Carmel, to the rancho of the Holy Fisherman. The record is complete !

Hop Sing. Alexandlee Molton —

Concho [*hurriedly returning to HOP SING*]. Yes ! good John ; yes, good John — go on. Alexander Morton —

Hop Sing. Alexandlee Molton. Me washee shirt, Alexandlee Molton ; he no pay washee. Me washee flowty dozen hep — four bittie dozen — twenty dollar hep. Alexandlee Molton no payee. He say, "Go to hellee !" You pay me [*extending his hand*].

Concho. *Car — !* [*checking himself.*] *Poco tiempo*, John ! In good time, John. Forty dollar — yes. Fifty dollar ! Tomorrow, John.

Hop Sing. Me no likee "to-morrow !" Me no likee "next time, John !" Allee time Melican man say, "Chalkee up, John," "No smallee change, John," — umph. Plenty foolee me !

Concho. You shall have your money, John ; but go now — you comprehend. *Carramba !* go ! [*Pushes HOP SING to wing.*]

Hop Sing [*expostulating*]. Flowty dozen, hep, John ! twenty dollar, John. Sabe. Flowty — twenty — [*gesticulating with fingers.*]

[*Exit HOP SING, pushed off by CONCHO.*]

Concho. The pagan dolt ! But he is important. Ah, if he were wiser, I should not rid myself of him so quickly ! And now for the schoolmistress, — the sweetheart of Sandy. If these men have not lied, he is in love with her ; and, if he is, he has told her his secret before now ; and she will be swift to urge him to his rights. If he has not told her — umph ! [*laughing*] it will not be a *day* — an *hour* — before she will find out if her lover is Alexander Morton, the rich man's son, or "Sandy," the unknown vagabond. Eh, friend Sandy ! It was a woman that locked up your secret ; it shall be a woman, *Madre di Dios !* who shall unlock it. Ha ! [*Goes to door of schoolhouse as door opens, and appears COL. STARBOTTLE.*]

Concho [*aside*]. A thousand devils ! the lawyer of the old man Morton. [*Aloud.*] Pardon, pardon ! I am a stranger. I have lost my way on the mountain. I am seeking a trail. *Señor*, pardon !

Starbottle [*aside*]. Another man seeking the road ! Ged, I believe he's lying too. [*Aloud.*] It is before you sir, *down*, — down the mountain.

Concho. A thousand thanks, *señor*. [*Aside.*] Perdition catch him ! [*Aloud.*] Thanks, *señor*. [*Exit R.*]

Starbottle. Ged, I've seen that face before. Ged, it's Castro's *major-domo*. Demn me, but I believe all his domestics have fallen in love with the pretty schoolma'am.

Enter MISS MARY from schoolhouse.

Miss Mary [*slowly refolding letter*]. You are aware, then, of the contents of this note ; and you are the friend of Alexander Morton, sen. ?

Col Starbottle. Permit me a moment, a single moment.

to — er — er — explain. I am Mr. Morton's legal adviser. There is — er — sense of — er — responsibility, — er — personal responsibility, about the term "friend," that at the — er — er — present moment I am not — er — prepared to assume. The substance of the letter is before you. I am here to — er — express its spirit. I am here [*with great gallantry*] to express the — er — yearnings of cousinly affection. I am aware — er — that *our* conduct, — if I may use the — er — the plural of advocacy, — I am aware that — er — *our* conduct has not in the past years been of — er — er — exemplary character. I am aware that the — er — death of our lamented cousin, your sainted mother, was — er — hastened — I may — er — say — pre — cip — itated — by our — er — indiscretion. But we are here to — er — confess judgment — with — er — er — costs.

Miss Mary [*interrupting*]. In other words, your client, my cousin, having ruined my father, having turned his own widowed relation out of doors, and sent me, her daughter, among strangers to earn her bread; having seen my mother sink and die in her struggle to keep her family from want, — this man now seeks to condone his offences — pardon me, — er, if I use your own legal phraseology — by offering me a home; by giving me part of his ill-gotten wealth, the association of his own hypocritical self, and the company of his shameless, profligate son —

Starbottle [*interrupting*]. A moment, Miss Morris, — a single moment! The epithets you have used, the — er — vigorous characterisation of our — er — conduct, is — er — within the — er — strict rules of legal advocacy, correct. We — er — er — rascals! we are — er — scoundrels! we are — er — well I am not — er — prepared to say that we are not — — damn me — hypocrites! But the young man you speak of — our son, whose past life (speaking as Col. Starbottle) no one more sincerely deprecates than myself, — that young man has reformed; has been for the past few months a

miracle of sobriety, decorum, and industry ; has taken thanks to the example of—er—friends, a position of integrity in his father's business, of filial obedience in his father's household ; is, in short, a paragon ; and, demn me, I doubt if he's his father's son.

Miss Mary. Enough, sir ! You are waiting for my answer. There is no reason why it should not be as precise, as brief, and as formal as your message. Go to my cousin ; say that you saw the person he claims as his relation ; say that you found her, a poor school-mistress, in a rude mining-camp, dependent for her bread on the scant earnings of already impoverished men, dependent for her honour on the rudeness and chivalry of outcasts and vagabonds ; and say that then and there she repudiated your kinship, and respectfully declined your invitation.

Starbottle [aside]. Ged ! Star ! this is the —er—female of your species ! This is the woman—the—er—other woman—for whom you are responsible, sir ! — personally responsible !

Miss Mary [coldly]. You have my answer, sir.

Col. Starbottle. Permit me —er—single moment, — single moment ! Between the —er—present moment, and that of my departure — there is an —er—interval of twelve hours. May I, at the close of that interval — again present myself — without prejudice, for your final answer ?

Miss Mary [indifferently]. As you will, sir. I shall be here.

Col. Starbottle. Permit me. [*Takes her hand gallantly.*] Your conduct and manner, Miss Morris, remind me —er—singularly — of —er—beautiful creature — one of the — —first families. [*Observing MISS MARY regarding him amusedly, becomes embarrassed.*] That is —er— I mean —er—er—good morning, Miss Morris ! [*Passes by school-house door retreating and bowing, and picks up flowers from door-step.*] Good morning !

Miss Mary. Excuse me, Col. Starbottle [*with winning politeness*], but I fear I must rob you of those flowers. I recognize them now as the offering of one of my pupils. I fear I must revoke my gift [*taking flowers from astonished colonel's hand*], all except a single one for your buttonhole. Have you any choice, or shall I [*archly*] choose for you? When it shall be this. [*Begins to place flowers in buttonhole, COL. STARBOTTLE exhibiting extravagant gratitude in dumb show. Business prolonged through MISS MARY'S speech*]. I am not wrong, colonel, the gentleman to whom you so kindly pointed out the road this morning was not a stranger to you. Ah! I am right. There, — one moment, — a sprig of green, a single leaf, would set off the pink nicely. Where he is known only as "Sandy:" you know the absurd habits of this camp. Of course he has another name. There! [*releasing the colonel*] it is much prettier now.

Col. Starbottle. Ged, madam! The rarest exotic — the Victoria Regina — is not as — er — graceful — er — tribute!

Miss Mary. And yet you refuse to satisfy my curiosity?

Col. Starbottle [*with great embarrassment, which at last resolves itself into increased dignity of manner*]. What you ask is — er — er — impossible! You are right: the — er — gentleman you allude to is known to me under — er — er — another name. But honour — Miss Morris, honour! — seals the lips of Col. Starbottle. [*Aside*]. If she should know he was a menial! No! The position of the man you have challenged, Star, must be equal to your own. [*Aloud*]. Any thing, Miss Morris, but — er — that!

Miss Mary [*smiling*]. Be it so. Adios, Col. Starbottle.

Col. Starbottle [*gallantly*]. Au revoir, Miss Morris.

[*Exit, impressively, left.*]

Miss Mary. So! Sandy conceals another name, which he withholds from Red Gulch. Well! Pshaw! What is that to me? The camp is made up of refugees, — men who perhaps have good reason to hide a name that may be infamous, the

name that would publish a crime. Nonsense ! Crime at Sandy ! No ! shame and guilt do not hide themselves from those honest but occasionally somewhat bloodshot eyes. Besides, goodness knows ! the poor fellow's weakness is palpable enough. No, that is not the reason. It is no guile that keeps his name hidden, — at least, not his. [*Seating herself, and arranging flowers in her lap.*] Poor Sandy ! he must have climbed the eastern summit to get this. See, the rosy sunrise still lingers in its very petals ; the dew is fresh upon it. Dear little mountain baby ! I really believe the fellow got up before daylight, to climb that giddy height and secure its virgin freshness. And to think, in a moment of spite, I'd have given it to that bombastic warrior ! [*Pause.*] That was a fine offer you refused just now, Miss Mary. Think of it : a home of luxury, a position of assured respect and homage ; the life I once led, with all its difficulties smoothed away, its uncertainty dispelled, — think of it ! My poor mother's dream fulfilled, — I, her daughter, the mistress of affluence, the queen of social power ! What a temptation ! Ah, Miss Mary, *was* it a temptation ? Was there nothing in your free life here that stiffened your courage that steeled the adamant of your refusal ? or was it only the memory of your mother's wrongs ? Luxury and wealth ! Could you command a dwelling more charming than this ? Position and respect ! Is not the awful admiration of the lawless men more fascinating than the perilous flattery of gentlemen like Col. Starbottle ? is not the devotion of the outcasts more complimentary than the lip-service of perfumed gallantry ? [*Pause.*] It's very odd he doesn't come. I wonder if that conceited old fool said anything to him. [*Rises, and then seats herself smiling.*] He *has* come. He is dodging in and out of the manganita bushes below the spring. I suppose he imagines my visitor still here. That bashful fool ! If anybody should see him, it would be enough to make a petty scandal ! I'll give him a talking to. [*Pause.*]

wonder if the ridiculous fool has gone to sleep in those
 shes. [*Rises.*] Well, let him: it will help him to recover
 his senses from last night's dissipation; and you, Miss Mary,
 'tis high time you were preparing the lessons for to-morrow.
*[Goes to schoolhouse, enters door, and slams it behind her;
 after a moment re-appears with empty bucket.]* Of course
 there's no water, and I am dying of thirst. [*Goes slowly to
 the well, and pauses embarrassedly and bashfully, presently laughs,
 then suddenly frowns, and assumes an appearance of indig-
 nation.*] Miss Mary Morris, have you become such an egre-
 gious fool that you dare not satisfy the ordinary cravings of
 human nature, just because an idle, dissipated, bashful block-
 head — nonsense! [*Exit, brandishing pail.*]

SCENE 3. — *The Same.*

[*A pause. SANDY'S voice, without.*] This way, miss; the
 well is easier.

[*MISS MARY'S voice, without.*] Never mind me: look
 for the bucket.

*Enter SANDY, carrying bucket with water, followed by MISS
 MARY. SANDY sets bucket down*

Miss Mary. There, you've spilt half of it. If it had been
 whisky, you'd have been more careful.

Sandy [submissively]. Yes, miss.

Miss Mary [aside]. "Yes, miss!" The man will drive
 me crazy with his saccharine imbecility. [*Aloud.*] I believe
 you would assent to anything, even if I said you were — an
 impostor!

Sandy [amazedly]. An impostor, Miss Mary?

Miss Mary. Well, I don't know what other term you use in
 the Gulch to express a man who conceals his real name
 under another.

Sandy [embarrassed, but facing MISS MARY]. Has anybody

been tellin' ye I was an impostor, miss? Has that derne old fool that I saw ye with ——

Miss Mary. "That old fool," as you call him, was too honourable a gentleman to disclose your secret, and too loyal a friend to traduce you by an epithet. Fear nothing, Miss "Sandy:" if you have limited your confidence to *one* friend it has not been misplaced. But, dear me, don't think *I* wish to penetrate your secret. No. The little I learned was accidental. Besides, his business was with me: perhaps, as his friend, you already know it.

Sandy [mceekly]. Perhaps, miss, he was too honourable a gentleman to disclose *your* secret. His business was with me.

Miss Mary [aside]. He has taken a leaf out of my book. He is not so stupid, after all. [*Aloud.*] I have no secret. Col. Starbottle came here to make me an offer.

Sandy [recoiling]. An offer!

Miss Mary. Of a home and independence. [*Aside.*] Poor fellow! how pale he looks! [*Aloud.*] Well, you see, I am more trustful than you. I will tell you *my* secret; and you shall aid me with your counsel. [*They sit on ledge of rocks.*] Listen! My mother had a cousin once,—a cousin cruel, cowardly, selfish, and dissolute. She loved him, as women are apt to love such men,—loved him so that she beguiled her own husband to trust his fortunes in the hands of this wretched profligate. The husband was ruined, disgraced. The wife sought her cousin for help for her necessities. He met her with insult, and proposed that she should fly with him.

Sandy. One moment, miss: it wasn't his pardner — his pardner's wife — eh?

Miss Mary [impatienily]. It was the helpless wife of his own blood, I tell you. The husband died broken-hearted. The wife, my mother, struggled in poverty, under the shadow of a proud name, to give me an education, and died while I was still a girl. To-day this cousin,—this more than mur-

er of my parents,— old, rich, self-satisfied, *reformed*, invites me, by virtue of that kinship he violated and despised, to his home, his wealth, his — his family roof-tree ! The man you saw was his agent.

Sandy. And you —

Miss Mary. Refused.

Sandy [*passing his hand over his forehead*]. You did wrong, Miss Mary.

Miss Mary. Wrong, sir ? [*Rising.*]

Sandy [*humbly but firmly*]. Sit ye down, Miss Mary. It ain't for ye to throw your bright young life away yer in this place. It ain't for such as ye to soil your fair young hands raking in the ashes to stir up the dead embers of a family wrong. It ain't for ye — ye'll pardon me, Miss Mary, for sayin' it — it ain't for ye to allow when it's *too late* fur a man to reform, or to go back of his reformation. Don't ye do it, miss, fur God's sake,— don't ye do it ! Harkin, Miss Mary. Ye'll take my advice — a fool's advice, maybe — ye'll go. And when I tell ye that that advice, if ye take it, will take the shine out of these hills, the colour off them trees, the freshness outer them flowers, the heart's blood outer me,— ye'll know that I ain't thinkin' o' myself, but of ye. And I couldn't say this much to ye, Miss Mary, but you're goin' away. There's a flower, miss, you're wearin' in your bosom, — a flower I picked at daybreak this morning, five miles away from the snow. The wind was blowing chill around it, so that my hands that dug for it were stiff and cold ; but the roots were warm, Miss Mary, as they are now in your bosom. Ye'll keep that flower, Miss Mary, in remembrance of my love for ye, that kept warm and blossomed through the snow. And, don't start, Miss Mary, — for ye'll leave behind ye, as I did, the snow and rocks through which it bloomed. I axes your pardoning, miss : I'm hurtin' yer feelin's, sure.

Miss Mary [*rising with agitation*]. Nothing,— nothing ; but climbing these stupid rocks has made me giddy : that's

all. Your arm. [*To SANDY impatiently.*] Can't you give me your arm? [*SANDY supports MISS MARY awkward toward schoolhouse. At door MISS MARY pauses.*] But this reformation is so easy, so acceptable, why have you not profited by it? Why have you not reformed? Why have you found you here, a disgraced, dissipated, anonymous outcast whom an honest girl dare not know? Why do you presume to preach to me? Have you a father?

Sandy. Hush, Miss Mary, hush! I had a father. Hark! All that you have suffered from a kinship even so far removed I have known from the hands of one who should have protected me. My father was—but no matter. You, Miss Mary, came out of your trials like gold from the washing. I was only the dirt and gravel to be thrown away. It is too late, Miss Mary, too late. My father has never sought me, would turn me from his doors had I sought him. Perhaps he is only right.

Miss Mary. But why should he be so different from others? Listen. This very cousin whose offer I refused had a son, wild, wayward, by all report the most degraded of men. It was part of my cousin's reformation to save this son, and, if it were possible, snatch him from that terrible fate which seemed to be his only inheritance.

Sandy [eagerly]. Yes, miss.

Miss Mary. To restore him to a regenerated home. With this idea he followed his prodigal to California. I, you understand, was only an after-thought consequent upon his success. He came to California upon this pilgrimage two years ago. He had no recollection, so they tell me, by which I could recognize this erring son; and at first his search was wild, profitless, and almost hopeless. But by degrees, and with a persistency that seemed to increase with his hopelessness, he was rewarded by finding some clue to him at — at — at —

Sandy [excitedly]. At Poker Flat?

Miss Mary. Ah, perhaps you know the story, — at Poker Flat. He traced him to the Mission of San Carmel.

Sandy. Yes, miss : go on.

Miss Mary. He was more successful than he deserved, perhaps. He found him. I see you know the story.

Sandy. Found him ! Found him ! Miss, did you say found him ?

Miss Mary. Yes, found him. And to-day Alexander Morton, the reclaimed prodigal, is part of the household I am invited to join. So you see, Mr. Sandy, there is still hope. What has happened to him is only a promise to you. Eh ! Mr. Sandy — what is the matter ? Are you ill ? Your exertion this morning, perhaps. Speak to me ! Gracious heavens, he is going mad ! No ! No ! Yes — it cannot be — it is — he has broken his promise : he is drunk again.

Sandy [*rising, excited and confused*]. Excuse me, miss, I am a little unsatisfied *here* [*pointing to his head*]. I can't — I don't remember — what you said just now : ye mentioned the name o' that prodigal that was found.

Miss Mary. Certainly : compose yourself, — my cousin's name, Alexander Morton. Listen, Sandy : you promised *me*, you know, you said for *my* sake you would not touch a drop.

Enter cautiously toward schoolhouse the DUCHESS, stops on observing SANDY, and hides behind rock.]

Sandy [*still bewildered and incoherent*]. I reckon. Harkin, miss, is that thar thing [*pointing toward rock where DUCHESS is concealed*] — is that a tree, or — or — a woman ? it sorter movin' this way ?

Miss Mary [*laying her hand on SANDY'S*]. Recover your senses, for Heaven's sake, Sandy, — for *my* sake ! It is only a tree.

Sandy [*rising*]. Then, miss, I've broke my word with ye : I'm drunk. P'r'aps I'd better be a-goin' [*looking round considerably*] till I'm sober. [*Going toward L.*]

Miss Mary [*seizing his hand.*] But you'll see me again, Sandy : you'll come here — before — before — I go ?

Sandy. Yes, miss, — before ye go. [*Staggers stupidly toward L. Aside.*] Found him ! found Alexander Morton ! It's a third time, Sandy, the third time : it means — it means — you're mad ! [*Laughs wildly, and exit L.*]

Miss Mary [*springing to her feet*]. There is a mystery behind all this, Mary Morris, that you — you — must discover. That man was *not* drunk : he *had not* broken his promise to me. What does it all mean ? I have it. I will accept the offer of this Alexander Morton. I will tell him the story of this helpless man, this poor, poor, reckless Sandy. With the story of his own son before his eyes, he cannot but interest himself in his fate. He is rich : he will aid me in my search for Sandy's father, for Sandy's secret. At the worst I can only follow the advice of this wretched man, — advice so generous, so kind, so self-sacrificing. Ah —

SCENE 4. — *The same.* Enter the DUCHESS, *showily and extravagantly dressed.* Her manner at first is a mixture of alternate shyness and bravado.

The Duchess. I heerd tell that you was goin' down to 'Frisco to-morrow, for your vacation ; and I couldn't let you go till I came to thank ye for your kindness to my boy, little Tommy.

Miss Mary [*aside. Rising abstractedly, and recalling herself with an effort.*] I see, — a poor outcast, the mother of my anonymous pupil. [*Aloud.*] Tommy ! a good boy, — dear, good little boy.

Duchess. Thankee, miss, thankee. If I am his mother, thar ain't a sweeter, dearer, better boy lives than him. And if I ain't much as says it, thar ain't a sweeter, dearer, angelic teacher than he's got. It ain't for you to be complimented by me, miss ; it ain't for such as me to be comin' here in bro-

ay to do it, neither ; but I come to ask a favour, — not for me, miss, but for the darling boy.

Miss Mary [*aside—abstractedly*]. This poor, degraded creature will kill me with her wearying gratitude. Sandy will not return, of course, while she is here. [*Aloud.*] Go on. If I can help you or yours, be assured I will.

The Duchess. Thankee, miss. You see, thar's no one the boy has any claim on but me, and I ain't the proper person to bring him up. I did allow to send him to 'Frisco, last year ; but when I heerd talk that a schoolma'am was comin up, and you did, and he sorter tuk to ye natril from the first, I guess I did well to keep him yer. For, oh, miss, he loves ye so much ; and, if you could hear him talk in his purty way, ye wouldn't refuse him anything.

Miss Mary [*with fatigued politeness, and increasing impatience.*] I see, I see : pray go on.

The Duchess [*with quiet persistency.*] It's natril he should take to ye, miss ; for his father, when I first knowed him, miss, was a gentleman like yourself ; and the boy must forget me sooner or later—and I ain't goin' to cry about *that*.

Miss Mary [*impatiently*]. Pray tell me how I can serve you.

The Duchess. Yes, miss ; you see, I came to ask you to take my Tommy, — God bless him for the sweetest, bestest boy that lives ! — to take him with you. I've money, plenty ; and it's all yours and his. Put him in some good school, whar ye can go and see, and sorter help him to — forget — his mother. Do with him what you like. The worst you can do will be kindness to what he would learn with me. You will : I know you will ; won't you ? You will make him as pure and as good as yourself ; and when he has grown up, and is a gentleman, you will tell him his father's name, — the name that hasn't passed my lips for years, — the name of Alexander Morton.

Miss Mary [*aside*]. Alexander Morton ! The prodigal ! Ah, I see, — the ungathered husks of his idle harvest.

The Duchess. You hesitate, Miss Mary. [*Seizing her hand.*] Do not take your hand away. You are smiling. God bless you ! I know you will take my boy. Speak to me, Miss Mary.

Miss Mary [*aloud*]. I will take your child. More than that, I will take him to his father.

The Duchess. No, no ! for God's sake, no, Miss Mary. He has never seen him from his birth : he does not know him. He will disown him. He will curse him, — will curse me.

Miss Mary. Why should he ? Surely his crime is worse than yours.

The Duchess. Hear me, Miss Mary. [*Aside.*] How can I tell her ? [*Aloud.*] One moment, miss. I was once — may not believe it, miss — as good, as pure, as you. I had a husband, the father of this child. He was kind, good, easy forgiving, — too good for me, miss, too simple and unsuspecting. He was what the world calls a fool, miss : he loved me too well, — the kind o' crime, miss, — beggin' your pardon, and all precepts to the contrary, — the one thing that women like me never forgives. He had a pardner, miss, that governed him as *he* never governed me ; that held him with the stronger will, and maybe *me* too. I was young, miss — no older than yourself then ; and I ran away with him — left all, and ran away with my husband's pardner. My husband — nat'rally — took to drink. I axes your pardon, miss ; but ye'll see now, allowin' your larnin', that Alexander Morton ain't the man as will take my child.

Miss Mary. Nonsense. You are wrong. He has been reformed ; he has been restored to his home, — your child's home, your home if you will but claim it. Do not fear. I will make that right.

Enter SANDY slowly and sheepishly, R. ; stops on observing the DUCHESS, and stands amazed and motionless.

Miss Mary [*observing SANDY — aside*]. He has returned. Poor fellow ! How shall I get rid of this woman ? [*Aloud.*]

Enough. If you are sincere, I will take your child, and, God help me! bring him to his home and yours. Are you satisfied?

The Duchess. Thank ye! Thank ye, miss; but—but that's a mistake somewhar. In course—it's natural—ye don't know the father of that child, my boy Tommy, under the name o' Alexander Morton. Ye're thinking, like as not, of another man. The man I mean lives yer, in this camp: they calls him Sandy, miss,—*Sandy!*

Miss Mary [after a pause, coming forward passionately]. Hush! I have given you my answer, be it Alexander Morton or Sandy. Go now: bring me the child this evening at my house. I will meet you there. [*Leads the DUCHESS to wing. The DUCHESS endeavours to fall at her feet.*]

Duchess. God bless you, miss!

Miss Mary [hurriedly embracing her]. No more, no more—but go! [*Exit DUCHESS. MISS MARY returns hurriedly to centre, confronting SANDY.*]

Miss Mary [to SANDY, hurriedly and excitedly]. You have heard what that woman said. I do not ask you under what *alias* you are known here: I only ask a single question,—Is *she* your wife? are you the father of her child?

Sandy [sinking upon his knees before her, and covering his face with his hands]. I am!

Miss Mary. Enough! [*Taking flower from her bosom.*] Here, I give you back the flower you gave me this morning. It has faded and died here upon my breast. But I shall replace it with your foundling,—the child of that woman, born like that flower in the snow! And I go now, Sandy, and leave behind me, as you said this morning, the snow and rocks in which it bloomed. Good-bye! Farewell, farewell—forever! [*Goes toward schoolhouse as—*

Enter COL. STARBOTTLE.

Miss Mary [to STARBOTTLE]. You are here in season, sir. You must have come for an answer to your question.

You must first give me one to mine. Who is this [*pointing to SANDY*], the man you met upon the rocks morning?

Col. Starbottle. Ahem ! I am — er — now fully prepared and responsible, I may say, miss — er — personally responsible, to answer that question. When you asked it this morning, the ordinary courtesy of the — er — code of honor threw a — er — cloak around the — er — antecedents of this — er — man whom I had — er — elected by a demand for personal satisfaction, to the equality of myself, an — er — gentleman ! That — er — cloak is now removed. I have waited six hours for an apology or a — er — reply to my demand. I am now free to confess that the — er — person you allude to was first known by me, three months ago, as an inebriated menial, — a groom in the household of my friend Don Castro, — by the — er — simple name of “Diego.”

Miss Mary [slowly]. I am satisfied. I accept my cousin's invitation.

[*Exit slowly, supported by COL. STARBOTTLE.*]

As STARBOTTLE and MISS MARY exeunt R., CONCHO HOP SING enter cautiously L. SANDY slowly rises to his feet, passes his hand across his forehead, looks around toward exit of STARBOTTLE and MISS MARY.

Sandy [slowly, but with more calmness of demeanor.] Gone, gone — forever ! No : I am not mad, nor crazed with drink. My hands no longer tremble. There is no confusion here. [*Feeling his forehead.*] I heard them all. It was a dream. I heard her every word. Alexander Morton, she spoke of Alexander Morton. She is going to his father. She is going — she, Mary, my cousin — she is going to my father. He has been seeking me — has found me — ah ! [*Groans.*] No, no, Sandy ! Be patient, be patient, you are not crazy — no, no, good Sandy, good old boy ! Be patient, be patient : it is coming, it is coming. Yes, I

some one has leaped into my place ; some one has leaped into the old man's arms. Some one will creep into *her* heart ! No ! by God ! No ! I am Alexander Morton. Yes, yes ! But how, how shall I prove it ? — how ? Who [*CONCHO steps cautiously forward toward SANDY unobserved*] will believe the vagabond, the outcast — my God ! — the crazy drunkard ?

Concho [*advancing, and laying his hand on SANDY*]. I will !

Sandy [*staggering back amazedly*]. You !

Concho. Yes, — I, I, — *Concho* ! You know me, Diego, you know me, — *Concho*, the *major-domo* of the Blessed Fisherman. Ha ! You know me now. Yes, I have come to save you. I have come to make you strong. So — I have come to help you strip the Judas that has stepped into your place, — the sham prodigal that has had the fatted calf and the ring, — ah ! ah !

Sandy. You ? You do not know me !

Concho. Ah ! you think, you think, eh ? Listen : Since you left I have tracked *him* — *the impostor*, this Judas, this coyote — step by step, until his tracks crossed yours ; and then I sought you out. I know all. I found a letter you had dropped ; that brought me to Poker Flat. Ah, you start ! I have seen those who knew you as Alexander Morton. You see ! Ah, I am wise.

Sandy [*aside*]. It is true. [*Aloud.*] But [*suspiciously*] why have you done this ? You, *Concho* ? — you were not my friend.

Concho. No, but *he* is my enemy. Ah, you start ! Look at me, Alexander Morton, Sandy, Diego ! You knew a man, strong, active, like yourself. Eh ! Look at me now ! Look at me, a cripple ! Eh ! lame and crushed here [*pointing to his leg*], broken and crushed here [*pointing to his heart*], by him, — the impostor ! Listen, Diego. The night I was sent to track you from the rancho, he — this man — struck me

from the wall, dashed me to the earth, and made *my body*, broken and bruised, a stepping-stone to leap the wall into your place, Diego, — into your father's heart, — into my master's home. They found me dead, they thought, — no, not dead, Diego! It was sad, they said, — unfortunate. They nursed me; they talked of money — eh, Diego! — money! They would have pensioned me to hush scandal — eh! I was a dog, a foreigner, a Greaser! Eh! That is why I am here. No! I love you not, Diego; you are of his race; but I hate — Mother of God! — I *hate* him!

Sandy [*rising to his feet, aside*]. Good! I begin to feel my courage return: my nerves are stronger. Courage, Sandy! [*Aloud*.] Be it so, Concho: there is my hand! We will help each other, — you to my birthright, I to your revenge! Hark ye! [*SANDY'S manner becomes more calm and serious*.] This impostor is *no* craven, *no* coyote. Whoever he is, he must be strong. He has most plausible evidences. We must have rigid proofs. I will go with you to Poker Flat. There is one man, if he be living, knows me better than any man who lives. He has done me wrong, — a great wrong, Concho, — but I will forgive him. I will do more, — I will ask his forgiveness. He will be a witness no man dare gainsay — my partner — God help him and forgive him as I do! — John Oakhurst.

Concho. Oakhurst your partner!

Sandy [*angrily*]. Yes. Look ye, Concho, **he** has wronged me in a private way: that is *my* business, not *yours*; but he was *my* partner, no one shall abuse him before me.

Concho. Be it so. Then sink here! Rot here! Go back to your husks, O prodigal! wallow in the ditches of this camp, and see your birthright sold for a dram of *aguardiente*! Lie here, dog and coyote that you are, with your mistress under the protection of your destroyer! For I tell you — I, Concho, the cripple — that the man who struck me down **the man** who stepped into your birthright, the man who

morrow welcomes your sweetheart in his arms, who holds the custody of your child, is your partner, — John Oakhurst! Sandy [*who has been sinking under CONCHO'S words, and falling convulsively to his feet*]. God be merciful to me a sinner! [*Faints.*]

Concho [*standing over his prostrate body exultingly*]. I am right. You are wise, Concho, you are wise! You have saved Alexander Morton!

Hop Sing [*advancing slowly to SANDY'S side, and extending open palm*]. Me washee shirt flo you, flowty dozen hab. You no payee me. Me wantee twenty dollar hep. Sabe!

[*Curtain.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The bank parlour of Morton & Son, San Francisco. Room richly furnished; two square library desks, left and right. At right, safe in wall; at left, same wall, practicable doors. Folding-door in flat C., leading to counting-room. Door in left to private room of Alexander Morton, sen.; door in right to private room of Morton, jun. ALEXANDER MORTON, sen., discovered at desk R., opening and reading letters.*

Morton, sen. [laying down letter]. Well, well, the usual story; letters from all sorts of people, who have done and intend to do all sorts of things for my reclaimed prodigal [*Reads.*] “Dear Sir: five years ago I loaned some money to a stranger who answers the description of your recovered son. He will remember Jim Parker,—Limping Jim, Poker Flat. Being at present short of funds, please send twenty dollars, amount loaned, by return mail. If not convenient, five dollars will do as instalment.” Pshaw! [*Throws letter aside, and takes up another.*] “Dear Sir: I invite your attention to inclosed circular for a proposed Home for Dissipated and Anonymous Gold-Miners. Your well-known reputation for liberality, and your late valuable experience in the reformation of your son, will naturally enlist your broadest sympathies. We enclose a draft for five thousand dollars for your signature.” We shall see! Another: “Dear Sir: the Society for the Formation of Bible Classes in the Upper Stanislaus acknowledge your recent munificent gift of five hundred dollars to the cause. Last Sabbath brother Harkins of Poker Flat related with touching effect the story of your prodigal to an assemblage of over two hundred miners. Owing to unusual expenses, we regret to be compelled

upon you for five hundred dollars more." So! [*Putting on letter.*] If we were given to pride and vain glory, we might well be puffed up with the fame of our works; and the contagion of our example: yet I fear that, with the worldly-minded, this praise of charity to others is only the prayerful expectation of some personal application to the praiser *by his hand-bell.*]

Enter JACKSON.

To JACKSON.] File these letters [*handing letters*] with the others. There is no answer. Has young Mr. Alexander been in yet?

Jackson. He only left here an hour ago. It was steamer yesterday: he was up all night, sir.

Old Morton [aside]. True. And the night before he travelled all night, riding two hours ahead of one of our default-agents, and saved the bank a hundred thousand dollars. Certainly, his devotion to business is unremitting. [*Aloud.*] Any news from Col. Starbottle?

Jackson. He left this note, sir, early this morning.

Old Morton [takes it, and reads]. "I think I may say, on my own personal responsibility, that the mission is successful. Miss Morris will arrive to-night with a female attendant and maid." [*To JACKSON.*] That is all, sir. Stop! Has any one been smoking here?

Jackson. Not to my knowledge, sir.

Old Morton. There was a flavour of stale tobacco-smoke in the room this morning when I entered, and ashes on the carpet. I know that young Mr. Alexander has abandoned his pernicious habit. See that it does not occur again.

Jackson. Yes, sir. [*Aside.*] I must warn Mr. Alexander that his friends must be more careful; and yet those ashes are good for a deposit of fifty thousand.

Old Morton. Is any one waiting?

Jackson. Yes, sir, — Don José Castro and Mr. Capper.

Old Morton. Show in the Don : the policeman can wait.

Jackson. Yes, sir. [Exit.

Old Morton [taking up STARBOTTLE'S note]. "Miss Morris will arrive to-night." And yet he saw her only yesterday. This is not like her mother : no. She would never have forgiven and forgotten so quickly. Perhaps she knew not my sin and her mother's wrongs ; perhaps she has — has — *Christian* forgiveness [sarcastically] ; perhaps, like my prodigal, she will be immaculately perfect. Well, well : at least her presence will make my home less lonely. "An attendant and child." A child ! Ah, if *he*, my boy, my Alexander, were still a child, I might warm this cold, cold heart in his sunshine ! Strange that I cannot reconstruct from this dutiful, submissive, obedient, industrious Alexander, — this redeemed outcast, this son who shares my life, my fortunes, my heart, — the foolish, wilful, thoughtless, idle boy, that once defied me. I remember [musing, with a smile] how the little rascal, ha, ha ! once struck me, — *struck me!* — when I corrected him : ha, ha ! [Rubbing his hands with amusement, and then suddenly becoming grave and lugubrious.] No, no. These are the whisperings of the flesh. Why should I find fault with him for being all that a righteous conversion demands, — all that I asked and prayed for ? No, Alexander Morton : it is you, *you*, who are not yet regenerate. It is *you* who are ungrateful to Him who blessed you, to Him whose guiding hand led you to —

Enter JACKSON.

Jackson. Don José Castro.

Enter DON JOSÉ.

Don José. A thousand pardons, *señor*, for interrupting you in the hours of business ; but it is — it is of business I would speak. [Looking around.]

Old Morton [to JACKSON]. You can retire. [Exit JACKSON.] Be seated, Mr. Castro : I am at your service.

Don José. It is of your — your son —

Old Morton. Our firm is Morton & Son : in business we have one, Mr. Castro.

Don José. *Bueno !* Then to you as to him I will speak. Here is a letter I received yesterday. It has significance, importance, perhaps. But, whatever it is, it is something for you, not me, to know. If I am wronged much, Don Alexandro, *you*, you, are wronged still more. Shall I read it? Good. *[Hands.]* "The man to whom you have affianced your daughter is not the son of Alexander Morton. Have a care. I do not prove him an impostor at the end of six days, believe me one, and not your true friend and servant, Concho." Six days, Don Alexandro, the year of probation is over, and I have promised my daughter's hand to your son. *[Hands letter to MORTON.]*

Old Morton *[ringing bell]*. Is that all, Mr. Castro?

Don José. All, Mr. Castro? *Carramba !* is it not enough?

Enter JACKSON.

Old Morton *[to JACKSON]*. You have kept a record of this business during the last eighteen months. Look at this letter. *[Handing letter.]* Is the handwriting familiar?

Jackson *[taking letter]*. Can't say, sir. The form is the old one.

Old Morton. How many such letters have you received?

Jackson. Four hundred and forty-one, sir. This is the four hundred and forty-second application for your son's position, sir.

Don José. Pardon. This is not an application : it is only information or caution.

Old Morton *[to JACKSON]*. How many letters of information or caution have we received?

Jackson. This makes seven hundred and eighty-one, sir.

Old Morton. How, sir ! *[Quickly.]* There were but seven hundred and seventy-nine last night.

Jackson. Beg pardon, sir ! The gentleman who carried Mr. Alexander's valise from the boat was the seven hundred and eightieth.

Old Morton. Explain yourself, sir.

Jackson. He imparted to me, while receiving his stipend, the fact that he did not believe young Mr. Alexander was your son. An hour later, sir, he also imparted to me confidentially that he believed you were his father, and requested the loan of five dollars, to be repaid by you, to enable him to purchase a clean shirt, and appear before you in respectable condition. He waited for you an hour, and expressed some indignation that he had not an equal show with others, to throw himself into your arms.

Don José [*rising, aside, and uplifting his hands*]. *Car-ramba !* These *Americaños* are of the Devil ! [*Aloud.*] Enough, Don Alexandro ! Then you think this letter is only worth —

Old Morton. One moment. I can perhaps tell you exactly its market value. [*To JACKSON.*] Go on, sir.

Jackson. At half-past ten, sir, then being slightly under the influence of liquor, he accepted the price of a deck passage to Stockton.

Old Morton. How much was that, sir ?

Jackson. Fifty cents.

Old Morton. Exactly so ! There you have, sir [*to DON JOSÉ*], the market value of the information you have received. I would advise you, as a business matter, not to pay more. As a business matter, you can at any time draw upon us for the amount. [*To JACKSON.*] Admit Mr. Capper. [*Exit JACKSON.*]

Don José [*rising with dignity*]. This is an insult, Don Alexandro.

Old Morton. You are wrong, Mr. Castro : it is *business*; sought, I believe, by yourself. Now that it is transacted, I beg you to dine with me to-morrow to meet my niece. No

fence, sir, no offence. Come, come ! Business, you know, business.

Don José [relaxing]. Be it so ! I will come. [*Aside.*] These Americanos, these Americanos, are of the Devil ! [*Aloud.*] *Adios.* [*Going.*] I hear, by report, that you have met with the misfortune of a serious loss by robbery ?

Old Morton [aside]. So our mishap is known everywhere ! [*Aloud.*] No serious misfortune, Mr. Castro, even if we do not recover the money. *Adios.* [*Exit DON JOSÉ.*]

Old Morton. The stiffnecked Papist ! That he should dare, for the sake of his black-browed, froward daughter, to question the faith on which I have pinned my future ! Well, with God's blessing, I gave him some wholesome discipline. It were not for my covenant with Alexander, — and nobly he has fulfilled his part, — I should forbid his alliance with the blood of this spying Jesuit.

Enter MR. JACKSON, leading in CAPPER.

Jackson. Policeman, sir. [*Exit.*]

Capper [turning sharply]. Who's that man ?

Old Morton. Jackson, clerk.

Capper. Umph ! Been here long ?

Old Morton. A year. He was appointed by my son.

Capper. Know anything of his previous life ?

Old Morton [stiffly]. I have already told you he is an appointee of my son's.

Capper. Yes ! [*Aside.*] "Like master, like man." [*Aloud.*] Well, to business. We have worked up the robbery. We have reached two conclusions, — one, that the work was not done by professionals ; the other, consequent upon this, that you can't recover the money.

Old Morton. Excuse me, sir, but I do not see the last conclusion.

Capper. Then listen. The professional thief has only one or two ways of disposing of his plunder, and these ways are

always well known to us. Good ! Your stolen coin has not been disposed of in the regular way, through the usual hands which we could at any time seize. Of this we are satisfied.

Old Morton. How do you know it ?

Capper. In this way. The only clue we have to the identification of the missing money were two boxes of Mexican doubloons.

Old Morton [aside]. Mr. Castro's special deposit ! He may have reason for his interest. [*Aloud.*] Go on.

Capper. It is a coin rare in circulation in the interior. The night after the robbery, the dealer of a monte-table in Sacramento paid out five thousand dollars in doubloons. He declared it was taken in at the table, and could not identify the players. Of course, *of course !* So far, you see, you are helpless. We have only established one fact, that the robber is — is — [*significantly*] a gambler.

Old Morton [quietly]. The regular trade of the thief seems to me to be of little importance if you cannot identify him, or recover my money. But go on, sir, go on : or is this all ?

Capper [aside]. The old fool is blind. That is natural. [*Aloud.*] It is not all. The crime will doubtless be repeated. The man who has access to your vaults, who has taken only thirty thousand dollars when he could have secured half a million, — this man, who has already gambled that thirty thousand away, — will not stop there. He will in a day or two, perhaps to-day, try to retrieve his losses out of *your* capital. *I* am here to prevent it.

Old Morton [becoming interested]. How ?

Capper. Give me, for forty-eight hours, free access to this building. Let me conceal myself somewhere, anywhere, within these walls. Let it be without the knowledge of your clerks, even of *your son !*

Old Morton [proudly]. Mr. Alexander Morton is absent to-day. There is no other reason why he should not be here to consent to the acts of his partner and father.

Capper [quickly]. Very good. It is only to insure absolute secrecy.

Old Morton [aside]. Another robbery might excite a suspicion, worse for our credit than our actual loss. There is significant earnestness about this man, that awakens my fears. If Alexander were only here ! [Aloud.] I accept. *CAPPER has been trying doors R. and L.*

Capper. What room is this ? [At R.]

Old Morton. My son's : I would prefer ——

Capper. And this ? [At L.]

Old Morton. Mine, sir ; if you choose ——

Capper [locking door, and putting key in his pocket]. This will do. Oblige me by making the necessary arrangements in your counting-room.

Old Morton [hesitating and aside]. He is right : perhaps it is only prudence, and I am saving Alexander additional care and annoyance. [Exit.]

Enter MR. SHADOW cautiously, C.

Shadow [in a lisping whisper to CAPPER]. I've got the right of the clerkth complete.

Capper [triumphantly]. Put it in your pocket, Shadow. We don't care for the lackeys now : we are after the master.

Shadow. Eh ! the mathter ?

Capper. Yes : the master, — the young master, the reclaimed son, the reformed prodigal ! ha, ha ! — the young man who compensates himself for all this austere devotion to business and principle by dipping into the old man's vaults when he wants a *pascar* : eh, Shadow ? That's the man we're after. Look here ! I never took any stock in that young man's reformation. Ye don't teach old sports like him new tricks. They're a bad lot, father and son, — eh, Shadow ? — and he's a chip of the old block. I spotted him before this robbery, before we were ever called in here professionally. I've had my eye on Alexander Morton, *alias* John Oakhurst ; and, when I found the old man's doubloons raked over a

monte-table at Sacramento, I knew where to look for the thief. Eh, Shadow?

Shadow [aside]. He ith enormouth, thith Mithter Capper.

Enter OLD MORTON.

Old Morton. I have arranged everything. You will not be disturbed or suspected here in my private office. Eh! [*Looking at* SHADOW.] Who has slipped in here?

Capper. Only my Shadow, Mr. Morton; but I can rid myself even of that. [*Crosses to* SHADOW.] Take this card to the office, and wait for further orders. Vanish, Shadow!

[*Exit* SHADOW.]

Enter JACKSON.

Jackson. Mr. Alexander has come in, sir. [OLD MORTON and CAPPER start.]

Old Morton. Where is he?

Jackson. In his private room, sir.

Old Morton. Enough: you can go. [*Exit* JACKSON.]

Capper [*crossing to* MORTON]. Remember, you have given your pledge of secrecy. Beware! Your honour, your property, the credit and reputation of your bank, are at stake.

Old Morton [*after a pause of hesitation, with dignity*]. I gave you my word, sir, while my son was not present. I shall save myself from breaking my word with you, or concealing anything from him, by withdrawing myself. For the next twenty-four hours, this room [*pointing to private room R.*] is yours.

Each regards the other. Exit OLD MORTON C., as CAPPER exit in private room R. After a pause, door of room L. opens, and HARRY YORK appears, slightly intoxicated, followed by JOHN OAKHURST.

Harry York [*looking around*]. By Jove! Morton, but you've got things in style here. And this yer's the gov'nor's desk; and here old Praise God Barebones sits opposite ye.

Look yer, old boy [*throwing himself in chair*], I kin allow now it comes easy for ye to run this bank, for it's about as exciting, these times, as faro was to ye in '49, when I first knew ye as Jack Oakhurst ; but how the Devil you can sit opposite that stiff embodiment of all the Ten Commandments, day by day, damn it ! that's wot *gets* me ! Why, the first day I came here on business, the old man froze me so that I couldn't thaw a deposit out of my pocket. It chills me to think of it.

Oakhurst [*hastily*]. I suppose I am accustomed to him. But come, Harry : let me warm you. [*Opens door of safe L., and discovers cupboard, decanter, and glasses.*]

York [*laughing*]. By Jove ! under the old man's very nose. Jack, this is like you. [*Takes a drink.*] Well, old boy, this is like old times. But you don't drink ?

Oakhurst. No, nor smoke. The fact is, Harry, I've taken year's pledge. I've six days still to run ; after that [*gloomily*], why [*with a reckless laugh*], I shall be Jack Oakhurst again.

York. Lord ! to think of your turning out to be anybody's son, Jack !—least of all, *his* ! [*Pointing to chair.*]

Oakhurst [*laughing recklessly*]. Not more strange than that I should find Harry York, the spendthrift of Poker Flat, the rich and respected Mr. York, produce-merchant, of San Francisco.

York. Yes ; but, my boy, you see I didn't strike it—in a rich father. I gave up gambling, married, and settled down, saved my money, invested a little here and there, and—worked for it, Jack, damn me,—worked for it like a damned horse !

Oakhurst [*aside*]. True, this is not work.

York. But that ain't my business with ye now, old boy : 's this. You've had some trials and troubles in the bank lately,—a defalcation of agents one day, a robbery next. It's luck, my boy, luck ! but ye know people will talk. You don't

mind my sayin' that there's rumours 'round. The old man's mighty unpopular because he's a saint ; and folks don't entirely fancy you because you used to be the reverse. Well, Jack, it amounts to 'bout this : I've withdrawn my account from Parkinson's, in Sacramento, and I've got a pretty heavy balance on hand — nigh on two hundred thousand — in bonds and certificates here ; and if it will help you over the rough places, old boy, as a deposit, yer it is [*drawing pocket-book*].

Oakhurst [*greatly affected, but endeavouring to conceal it*]. Thank you, Harry, old fellow — but —

York [*quickly*]. I know : I'll take the risk, a business risk. You'll stand by me all you can, old boy ; you'll make it pay all you can ; and if you lose it — why — all right !

Oakhurst [*embarrassed*]. As a deposit with Morton & Son, drawing two per cent. monthly interest —

York. Damn Morton & Son ! I'll back it with Jack Oakhurst, the man I know.

Oakhurst [*advancing slowly*]. I'll take it, Harry.

York [*extending his hand*]. It's a square game, Jack !

Oakhurst [*seizing his hand with repressed emotion*]. It's a square game, Harry York, if I live.

York. Then I'll travel. Good-night, old boy. I'll send my clerk around in the morning to put things right. Good-night [*going*].

Oakhurst [*grasping YORK'S hand*]. One moment — no — nothing ! Good-night. [*Exit YORK.*]

OAKHURST follows him to door, and then returns to desk, throwing himself in chair, and burying his face in his hands.

Oakhurst [*with deep feeling*]. It needed but this to fill the measure of my degradation. I have borne the suspicions of the old man's enemies, the half-pitying, half-contemptuous sympathy of his friends, even his own cold, heartless, fanatical fulfilment of his sense of duty ; but *this* — this confidence

from one who had most reason to scorn me, this trust from one who knew me as I *was*,—this is the hardest burden. And he, too, in time will know me to be an impostor. He too—a reformed man; but he has honourably retraced his steps, and won the position I hold by a trick, an imposture. And what is all my labour beside his honest sincerity? I have fought against the chances that might discover my deception, against the enemies who would overthrow me, against the fate that put me here; and I have been successful—yes, a successful impostor! I have even fought against the human instinct that told this fierce, foolish old man that *I* was an alien to his house, to his blood; I have even felt him scan my face eagerly for some reflection of his long-lost boy, for some realization of his dream; and I have seen him turn away, cold, heartsick, and despairing. What matters that I have been to him devoted, untiring, submissive, aye, a better son to him than his own weak flesh and blood would have been? He would to-morrow cast me forth to welcome the outcast, Sandy Morton. Well, what matters? [*Recklessly.*] Nothing. In six days it will be over; in six days the year of my probation will have passed; in six days I will disclose to him the deceit I have practised, and will face the world again as John Oakhurst, the gambler, who staked and lost *all* on a single cast. And Jovita! Well, well!—the game is made: it is too late to draw out now. [*Rings bell. Enter JACKSON.*]
Who has been here?

Jackson. Only Don José, and Mr. Capper the detective.

Oakhurst. The detective? What for?

Jackson. To work up the robbery, sir.

Oakhurst. True! Capper, Capper, yes! A man of wild and ridiculous theories, but well-meaning, brave, and honest.

[*Aside.*] This is the old man's idea. He does not know that I was on the trail of the thieves an hour before the police were notified. [*Aloud.*] Well, sir?

Jackson. He told your father he thought the recovery of

the money hopeless, but he came to caution us against a second attempt.

Oakhurst [aside, starting]. True! I had not thought of that. [*Excitedly*]. The success of their first attempt will incite them to another; the money they have stolen is gone by this time. [*Aloud*]. Jackson, I will stay here to-night and to-morrow night, and relieve your regular watchman. You will, of course, say nothing of my intention.

Jackson. Yes, sir. [*Lingering.*]

Oakhurst [after a pause]. That is all, Mr. Jackson.

Jackson. Beg your pardon, Mr. Morton; but Col. Starbottle, with two ladies, was here half an hour ago, and said they would come again when you were alone.

Oakhurst. Very well: admit them.

Jackson. Beg pardon, sir; but they seemed to avoid seeing your father until they had seen you. It looked mysterious, and I thought I would tell you first.

Oakhurst [laughing]. Admit them, Mr. Jackson. [*Exit JACKSON.*] This poor fellow's devotion is increasing. He, too, believes that his old associate in dissipation, John Oakhurst, is the son of Alexander Morton. He, too, will have to share in the disgrace of the impostor. Ladies! umph! [*Looking down at his clothes.*] I'm afraid the reform of Alexander Morton hasn't improved the usual neatness of John Oakhurst. I haven't slept, nor changed my clothes, for three days. [*Goes to door of MORTON, sen.'s, room.*] Locked, and the key on the inside! That's strange. Nonsense! the old man has locked his door, and gone out though the private entrance. Well, I'll find means of making my toilet here.

[*Exit into private room L.*]

Enter JACKSON, leading in COL. STARBOTTLE, MISS MARY, the DUCHESS, and child of three years.

Jackson. Mr. Alexander Morton, jun., is in his private room. He will be here in a moment. [*Exit JACKSON.*]

Starbottle. One moment, a single moment, Miss Mary. Permit me to—er—if I may so express myself, to—er—group the party, to—er—place the—er—present company into position. I have—er—observed as part of my—er—legal experience, that in cases of moral illustration a great, I may say—er—tremendous, effect on the—er—jury, I mean the—er—guilty party, has been produced by the attitude of the—er—victim and martyr. You, madam, as the—er—injured wife [*placing her*], shall stand here, firm yet expectant, protecting your child, yet looking hopefully for assistance toward its natural protector. You, Miss Mary, shall stand here [*placing her*], as Moral Retribution, leaning toward and slightly appealing to me, the image of—er—er—Inflexible Justice! [*Inflates his chest, puts his hand in his bosom, and strikes an attitude.*]

Door of young MORTON'S room opens, and discloses MR. OAKHURST gazing at the group. He starts slightly on observing the DUCHESS, but instantly recovers himself, and faces the company coldly. The DUCHESS starts on observing OAKHURST, and struggles in confusion toward the door, dragging with her the child and MISS MARY, who endeavours to reassure her. COL. STARBOTTLE looks in astonishment from one to the other, and advances to front.

Col. Starbottle [aside]. The—er—tableau, although striking in moral force, is apparently—er—deficient in moral stamina.

Miss Mary [angrily to the DUCHESS]. I'm ashamed of you! [*To OAKHURST, advancing.*] I don't ask pardon for my intrusion. If you are Alexander Morton, you are my kinsman, and you will know that I cannot introduce myself better than as the protector of an injured woman. Come here! [*To the DUCHESS, dragging her toward OAKHURST. To OAKHURST.*] Look upon this woman: she claims to be—

Starbottle [*stepping between* MISS MARY *and the* DUCHESS]. A moment, Miss Mary, a single moment ! Permit me to — er — explain. The whole thing, the — er — situation reminds me, demn me, of most amusing incident at Sacramento in '52. Large party at Hank Suedecois : know Hank ? Confirmed old bach of sixty. Dinner for forty. Everything in style, first families, Ged, — Judge Beeswinger, Mat Boompinter, and Maje Blodgett of Ahlabam : know old Maje Blodgett ? Well, Maje was there. Ged, sir, delay, — everybody waiting. I went to Hank. "Hank," I says, "what's matter ? why delay ?" — "Star," he says, — always called me Star, — "Star, — it's cook !" — "Demn cook," I says : "discharge cook, — only a black mulatto any way !" — "Can't, Star," he says : "impossible !" — "Can't ?" says I. "No," says he. "Listen, Star," he says, "family secret ! Honour ! Can't discharge cook, because cook — demn it — 's *my wife* !" Fact, sir, fact — showed marriage certificate — married privately seven years ! Fact, sir —

The Duchess [*to* MISS MARY]. Some other time, miss. Let us go now. There's a mistake, miss, I can't explain. Some other time, miss ! See, miss, how cold and stern he looks ! another time, miss ! [*Struggling.*] For God's sake, miss, let me go !

Miss Mary. No ! This mystery must be cleared up now, before I enter *his* house, — before I accept the charge of this —

Starbottle [*interrupting, and crossing before* MISS MARY]. A moment — a single moment, miss. [*To* OAKHURST.] Mr. Morton, you will pardon the exuberance, and perhaps, under the circumstances, somewhat natural impulsiveness, of the — er — sex, for which I am perhaps responsible ; I may say — er — personally, sir, — personally responsible —

Oakhurst [*coldly.*] Go on, sir.

Starbottle. The lady on my right is — er — the niece of your father, — your cousin. The lady on my left, engaged in

soothing the — er — bashful timidity of infancy, is — er — that is — er — claims to be, the mother of the child of Alexander Morton.

Oakhurst [*calmly*]. She is right.

Miss Mary [*rushing forward*]. Then you are ——

Oakhurst [*gently restraining her*]. You have another question to ask : you hesitate : let me ask it. [*Crossing to the DUCHESS.*] You have heard my answer. Madame, are you the legal wife of Alexander Morton ?

The Duchess [*sinking upon her knees, and dropping her face in her hands*]. No !

Oakhurst. Enough : I will take the child. Pardon me, Miss Morris, but you have heard enough to know that your mission is accomplished, but that what else passes between this woman and myself becomes no stranger to hear. [*Motions toward room L.*]

Miss Mary [*aside*]. It is *his* son. I am satisfied [*going*]. Come, colonel. [*Exeunt into room L., STARBOTTLE and MISS MARY.*]

The Duchess [*crossing to OAKHURST, and falling at his feet.*] Forgive me, Jack, forgive me ! It was no fault of mine. I did not know that you were here. I did not know that you had taken his name !

Oakhurst. Hush — on your life !

The Duchess. Hear me, Jack ! I was anxious only for a home for my child. I came to *her* — the school-mistress of Red Gulch — for aid. I told her the name of my boy's father. She — she brought me here. Oh, forgive me, Jack ! I have offended you !

Oakhurst. How can I believe you ? You have deceived *him*. You have deceived me. Listen ! When I said, a moment ago, you were not the wife of Alexander Morton, it was because I knew that your first husband — the Australian convict Pritchard — was still living ; that you had deceived Sandy Morton as you had deceived me. That was why I

left you. Tell me, have you deceived me also about him, as you did about the other? Is *he* living, and with you; or dead, as you declared?

The Duchess [*aside*]. He will kill me if I tell him. [*Aloud.*] No, no. He is gone — is dead these three years.

Oakhurst. You swear!

The Duchess [*hesitates, gasps, and looks around for her child; then seizing it, and drawing it toward her*]. I — swear.

Oakhurst. Enough. Seek not to know why *I* am here, and under his name. Enough for you that it has saved your child's future, and secured him his heritage past all revocation. Yet remember! a word from you within the next few days destroys it all. After that, I care not what you say.

The Duchess. Jack! One word, Jack, before I go. I never thought to bring my shame to you! — to *him*!

Oakhurst. It was no trick, then, no contrivance, that brought her here. No: it was fate. And at least I shall save *his* child.

Re-enter STARBOTTLE and MISS MARY DUCHESS.

Col. Starbottle [*impressively*]. Permit me, Mr. Alexander Morton, as the friend of my — er — principal, to declare that we have received — honourable — honourable — satisfaction. Allow me, sir, to grasp the hand, the — er — cherished hand of a gentleman who, demn me! has fulfilled all his duties to — er — society and gentlemen. And allow me to add, sir, should any invidious criticism of the present — er — settlement be uttered in my presence, I shall hold that critic responsible, sir, — er — personally responsible!

Miss Mary [*sweeping truculently and aggressively up to JOHN OAKHURST*]. And permit *me* to add, sir, that, if you can see your way clearly out of this wretched muddle, it's more than I can. This arrangement may be according to the Californian code of morality, but it doesn't accord with

my Eastern ideas of right and wrong. If this foolish, wretched creature chooses to abandon all claim upon you, chooses to run away from you, — why, I suppose, as a *gentleman*, according to your laws of honour, you are absolved. Good-night, Mr. Alexander Morton. [*Goes to door C., and exit, pushing out STARBOTTLE, the DUCHESS, and child.* MR. OAKHURST *sinks into chair at desk, burying his face in his hands.* Re-enter slowly and embarrassedly, MISS MARY: *looks toward OAKHURST, and comes slowly down stage.*]

Miss Mary [*aside*]. I was too hard on him. I was not so hard on Sandy, when I thought that he — he — was the father of her child. And he's my own flesh and blood, too ; and — he's crying. [*Aloud.*] Mr. Morton.

Oakhurst [*slowly lifting his head*]. Yes, Miss Mary.

Miss Mary. I spoke hastily just then. I — I — thought — you see — I — [*angrily and passionately*] I mean this. I'm a stranger. I don't understand your Californian ways, and I don't want to. But I believe you've done what you thought was right, according to a *man's* idea of right ; and — there's my hand. Take it, take it ; for it's a novelty, Mr. Morton : it's the hand of an honest girl !

Oakhurst [*hesitates, then rises, sinks on one knee, and raises MISS MARY'S fingers to his lips*]. God bless you, miss ! God bless you !

Miss Mary [*retreating to centre door.*] Good-night, good-night [*slowly*], — cousin — Alexander. [*Exit. Dark stage.*]

Oakhurst [*rising swiftly*]. No, no : it is false ! Ah ! She's gone. Another moment, and I would have told her all. Pshaw ! courage, man ! It is only six days more, and you are free, and this year's shame and agony forever ended.

Enter JACKSON.

Jackson. As you ordered, sir, the night watchman has been relieved, and has just gone.

Oakhurst. Very good, sir ; and you ?

Jackson. I relieved the porter, sir ; and I shall bunk on two chairs in the counting-room. You'll find me handy, if you want me, sir. Good-night, sir. [*Exit C.*]

Oakhurst. I fear these rascals will not dare to make their second attempt to-night. A quiet scrimmage with them enough to keep me awake or from thinking, would be a good fortune. No, no ! no such luck for you to-night, John Oakhurst ! You are playing a losing game. . . . Yet the robbery was a bold one. At eleven o'clock, while the bank was yet lighted, and Mr. Jackson and another clerk were at work here, three well-dressed men pick the lock of the counting-house door, enter, and turn the key on the clerks in this parlour, and carry away a box of doubloons not yet placed in the vaults by the porter ; and all this done so cautiously that the clerks within knew nothing of it until notified of the open street-door by the private watchman, and so boldly that the watchman, seeing them here, believed them clerks of the bank, and let them go unmolested. No : this was the coincidence of good luck, not of bold premeditation. There will be no second attempt. [*Yawns.*] If they don't come soon I shall fall asleep. Four nights without rest will tell on a man, unless he has some excitement to back him. [*Nods.*] Hallo ! What was that ? Oh ! Jackson in the counting-room getting to bed. I'll look at that front-door myself. [*Takes revolver from desk, and goes to door C., tries lock, comes down stage with revolver, examines it, and lays it down.*]

Oakhurst [*slowly and quietly*]. The door is locked on the outside : that may have been an accident. The caps are taken from my pistol : *that* was not ! Well, here is the vault, and here is John Oakhurst : to reach the one, they must pass the other. [*Takes off his coat, seizes poker from grate, and approaches safe.*] Ha ! some one is moving in the old man's room. [*Approaches door of room R. as—*

Enter noiselessly and cautiously from room L., PRITCHARD, SILKY, and SOAPY. PRITCHARD and his confederates approach OAKHURST from behind, carrying lariat, or slip-noose.

Oakhurst [listening at door R.]. Good. At least I know from what quarter to expect the attack. Ah !

PRITCHARD throws slip-noose over OAKHURST from behind; OAKHURST puts his hand in his breast as the slip-noose is drawn across his bosom, pinioning one arm over his breast, and the other at his side. SILKY and SOAPY, directed by PRITCHARD, drag OAKHURST to chair facing front, and pinion his legs. PRITCHARD C., regarding him.

Oakhurst [very coolly]. You have left me my voice, I suppose, because it is useless.

Pritchard. That's so, pard. 'Twon't be no help to ye.

Oakhurst. Then you have killed Jackson.

Pritchard. Lord love ye, no ! That ain't like us, pard ! Jackson's tendin' door for us, and kinder lookin' out gin'rally for the boys. Thar's nothin' mean about Jackson.

Soapy. No ! Jackson's a squar man. Eh, Silky ?

Silky. Ez white a man ez they is, pard !

Oakhurst [aside]. The traitor ! *[Aloud.]* Well !

Pritchard. Well, you want ter know our business. Call upon a business man in business hours. Our little game is this, Mr. Jack Morton Alexander Oakhurst. When we was here the other night, we was wantin' a key to that theer lock *[pointing to vault]*, and we sorter dropped in passin' to get it.

Oakhurst. And suppose I refuse to give it up ?

Pritchard. We were kalkilatin' on yer bein' even that impolite : wasn't we, boys ?

Silky and Soapy. We was that.

Pritchard. And so we got Mr. Jackson to take an impression of it in wax. Oh, he's a squar man—is Mr. Jackson !

Silky. Jackson is a white man, Soapy !

Soapy. They don't make no better men nor Jackson Silky.

Pritchard. And we've got a duplicate key here. But we don't want any differences, pard : we only want a squar game. It seemed to us—some of your old pards as knew ye, Jack—that ye had a rather soft thing here, reformin' ; and we thought ye was kinder throwin' off on the boys, not givin' 'em any hand in the game. But thar ain't any thin' mean about us. Eh, boys ?

Soapy. We is allers ready to chip in ekal in the game. Eh, Silky ?

Silky. That's me, Soapy.

Pritchard. Ye see, the boys is free and open-handed, Jack. And so the proposition we want make to ye, Jack, is this. It's reg'lar on the squar. We reckon, takin' Mr. Jackson's word,—and thar ain't no man's word ez is better nor Jackson's,—that there's nigh on to two millions in that vault, not to speak of a little speshil de-posit o' York's, ez we learn from that accommodatin' friend, Mr. Jackson. We propose to share it with ye, on ekil terms—us five—countin' Jackson, a square man. In course, we takes the risk o' packin' it away to-night comfortable. Ez your friends, Jack, we allow this yer little arrangement to be a deuced sight easier for you than playin' Sandy Morton on a riglar salary, with the chance o' the real Sandy poppin' in upon ye any night.

Oakhurst. It's a lie. Sandy is dead.

Pritchard. In course, in course ! that is your little game ! But we kalkilated, Jack, even on that, on yer bein' ram bunktious and contrary ; and so we went ter Red Gulch, and found Sandy. Ye know I take a kind o' interest in Sandy : he's the second husband of my wife, the woman you run away with, pard. But thar's nothin' mean about me ! eh, boys ?

Silky. No! he's the forgivingest kind of a man, is Pritchard.

Soapy. That's so, Silky.

Pritchard. And, thinkin' ye might be dubious, we filled Sandy about full o' rye-whisky, and brought him along; and one of our pards is preambulating the streets with him, ready to bring him on call.

Oakhurst. It's a lie, Pritchard,—a cowardly lie!

Pritchard. Is it? Hush!

Sandy [*without, singing*],—

Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!

Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!

Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
All alive and just a-snortin'!

Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
Drink him down!

Pritchard. We don't propose to run him in yer, 'cept we're took, or yer unaccommodatin' to the boys.

Oakhurst. And if I refuse?

Pritchard. Why, we'll take what we can get; and we'll leave Sandy Morton with you yer, to sorter alleviate the old man's feelin's over the loss of his money. There's nothin' mean about us; no! eh, boys? [*Going toward safe.*]

Oakhurst. Hear me a moment, Henry Pritchard. [PRITCHARD stops abreast of OAKHURST.] Four years ago you were assaulted in the Arcade Saloon in Sacramento. You would have been killed, but your assailant suddenly fell dead by a pistol-shot fired from some unknown hand. I stood twenty feet from you with folded arms; but that shot was fired by me,—me, Henry Pritchard,—through my clothes, from a derringer hidden in my waistcoat! Understand me, I do not ask your gratitude now. But that pistol is in my right hand, and now covers you. Make a single motion,—of a muscle,—and it is your last.

Pritchard [motionless, but excitedly]. You dare not fire ! No, dare not ! A shot here will bring my pal and Sandy Morton to confront you. You will have killed me to save exposure, have added murder to imposture ! You have no witness to this attempt !

Capper [opening door of room L., at the same moment that two policemen appear at door C., and two at room R.] You are wrong : he has five [crossing to SILKY and SOAPY, and laying his hands on their shoulders] ; and, if I mistake not, he has two more in these gentlemen, whom I know, and who will be quite as willing to furnish the necessary State's evidence of the robbery, as of the fact that they never knew any other Alexander Morton than the gentleman who sits in that chair.

Soapy. That's so, Silky.

Silky. That's so, Soapy.

Capper [to policemen]. Take them away.

[Exit policemen with PRITCHARD, SOAPY, and SILKY.
CAPPER unbinds OAKHURST.]

Oakhurst. Then I have to thank you, Mr. C.

Capper. Yes ! "A man of ridiculous theories, but well-meaning, brave, and honest." No, sir ; don't apologise : you were right, Mr. Oakhurst. It is I who owe you an apology. I came here, believing *you* were the robber, having no faith in you or your reformation, expecting,—yes, sir,—hoping, to detect you in the act. Hear me ! From the hour you first entered the bank, I have shadowed your every movement, I have been the silent witness of all that has passed in this room. You have played a desperate game, Mr. Oakhurst ; but I'll see you through it. If you are true to your resolve, for the next six days, I will hold these wretches silent. I will protect your imposture with the strong arm of the law. I don't like *your* theories, sir ; but I believe you to be well-meaning, and I know you to be brave and honest.

Oakhurst [*grasping his hand*]. I shall not forget this. But Sandy——

Capper. I will put my men on his track, and have him brought quietly here. I can give you no aid beyond that. As an honourable man, I need not tell you your duty. Settle it with *him* as best you can.

Oakhurst. You are right ; I *will* see him ! [*Aside.*] Unless he has changed, he will listen to me, he will obey me.

Capper. Hush ! [*Blows out candle.*] Stand here !

[*CAPPER and OAKHURST retreat to wing L., as enter MORTON, sen., from room R.*

Morton. The private door open, the room dark, and *Capper* gone. I don't like this. The more I think of the mystery of that man's manner this morning, the more it seems to hide some terrible secret I must fathom ! There are watches here. [*Strikes a light, as CAPPER draws OAKHURST, struggling, back into shadow.*] What's this ? [*Picking up key.*] The key of the vault. A chair overturned. [*Touches bell.*] No answer ! Jackson gone ! My God ! A terrible suspicion haunts me ! No. Hush ! [*Retreats to private room R., as door of L. opens and ——*

Enter SANDY.

Sandy [*drunkenly*]. Shoo ! Shoo ! boys, whar are ye, boys, eh ? Pritchard, Silky, Soapy ! Whar ar ye, boys ?

Morton [*aside*]. A crime has been committed, and here is one of the gang. God has delivered him in my hands. [*Draws revolver, and fires, as OAKHURST breaks from CAPPER, and strikes up MORTON'S pistol. CAPPER at same moment seizes SANDY, and drags him in room L. MORTON and OAKHURST struggle to centre.*

Morton [*relaxing hold of Oakhurst*]. Alexander ! Good God ! Why are you here ? Why have you stepped between me and retribution ? You hesitate. God in heaven ! Speak,

Alexander, my son, speak, for God's sake ! Tell me-- tell me that this detective's suspicions are not true. Tell me that you are not — not — no, I cannot say it. Speak, Alexander Morton, I command you ! Who is this man you have saved ? Is it — is it — your accomplice ?

Oakhurst [*sinking at his feet*]. Don't ask me ! You know not what you ask ! I implore you —

Capper [*appearing quietly from room L., and locking the door behind him*]. Your son has acted under *my* orders. The man he has saved, as he has saved you, was a *decoy*, — one of my policemen.

TABLEAU.

CAPPER, MORTON, OAKHURST.

[*Curtain.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — MR. MORTON'S *villa*, *Russian Hill*. *Night*.
 OAKHURST'S *bedroom*. *Sofa in alcove C., door in flat left of C.* SANDY MORTON *discovered, unconscious, lying on sofa*; OAKHURST *standing at his head, two policemen at his feet*. *Candles on table L.*

Oakhurst. That will do. You are sure he was unconscious as you brought him in?

1st Policeman. Sure, sir. He hasn't known anything since we picked him up on the sidewalk outside the bank.

Oakhurst. Good! You have fulfilled your orders well, and your chief shall know it. Go now. Be as cautious in going out as you were on entering. Here is the private staircase. [*Opens door L.*] [*Exit policemen.*]

Oakhurst [*listening*]. Gone! and without disturbing any one. So far, luck has befriended me. He will sleep to-night beneath his father's roof. His father! umph! would the old man recognize him here? Would he take to his heart this drunken outcast, picked from the gutters of the street, and brought here by the strong arm of the law? Hush! [*A knock without.*] Ah, it is the colonel: he is prompt to the hour. [*Opens door cautiously, and admits COL. STARBOTTLE.*]

Starbottle [*looking around, and overlooking SANDY*]. I presume the other — er — principal is not yet on the ground?

Oakhurst [*motioning to sofa*]. He is!

Starbottle [*starting as he looks toward sofa*]. Ged! you don't mean to say it's all *over*, without witnesses, without my — er — presence?

Oakhurst. Pardon me, Col. Starbottle ; but, if you look again, you will perceive that the gentleman is only drunk.

Starbottle. Eh? Ged! not uncommon, sir, not uncommon! I remember singular incident at — er — Louisville in '47. Old Judge Tollim — know old Judge Tolly? — Ged! he came to ground drunk, sir; couldn't stand! Demn me, sir, had to put him into position with kitchen poker down his back, and two sections of lightning-rod in his — er — trousers, demn me! Firm, sir, firm, you understand, here [*striking his breast*], but — here [*striking his legs*] — er — er — wobbly! No, sir! Intoxication of principal not a bar, sir, to personal satisfaction! [*Goes toward sofa with eyeglass.*] Good Ged! why, it's Diego! [*Returning stiffly to OAKHURST.*] Excuse me, sir, but this is a case in which I cannot act. Cannot, sir, — impossible! absurd! pre — post — er — ous! I recognise in the — er — inebriated menial on yonder sofa, a person, sir, who, having already declined my personal challenge, is — er — excluded from the consideration of gentlemen. The person who lies there, sir, is Diego, — a menial of Don José Castro, — *alias* "Sandy," the vagabond of Red Gulch.

Oakhurst. You have omitted one title, his true one. He is Alexander Morton, the son of the master of this house.

Starbottle [*starting in bewilderment*]. Alexander Morton! [*Aside.*] Ged! my first suspicions were correct. Star, you have lost the opportunity of making your fortune as a scoundrel; but you have, at a pecuniary sacrifice, preserved your honour.

Oakhurst. Yes. Hear me, Col. Starbottle. I have summoned you here to-night, as I have already intimated, on an affair of honour. I have sought you as my father's legal counsel, as a disinterested witness, as a gentleman of honour. The man who lies before you was once my friend and partner. I have wronged him doubly. As his partner, I ran away with the woman he believed, and still believes, to be his wife; as his friend, I have for a twelvemonth kept him from the enjoy-

ment of his home, his patrimony, by a shameful deception. I have summoned you to-night to witness my confession ; as a lawyer, to arrange those details necessary to restore to him his property ; as a man of honour, to receive from me whatever retribution he demands. You will be a witness to our interview. Whatever befalls me here, you will explain to Mr. Morton—to Jovita—that I accepted it as a man, and did not avoid, here or elsewhere, the penalty of my crime. [*Folding his arms.*]

Starbottle. Umph ! The case is, as you say, a delicate one, but not—not—peculiar. No, sir ! Ged, sir, I remember Tom Marshall—know Tom Marshall of Kentucky ?—said to me, “ Star ! ”—always calls me Star,—“ how in blank, sir, can you remember the *real* names of your clients ? ”—“ Why,” says I, “ Tom,”—always called him Tom,—“ yesterday I was called to make will—most distinguished family of Virginia—as lawyer and gentleman, you understand : can’t mention name. Waited for signature—most distinguished name : Ged, sir, man signed Bloggins,—Peter Bloggins ! Fact, demme ! ‘ Mistake,’ I said,—‘ excitement ; exaltation of fever. *Non compos.* Compose yourself, Bob.’—‘ Star,’ he said,—always called me Star,—‘ for forty-seven years I have been an impostor ! ’—his very words, sir. ‘ I am not ’—you understand : ‘ I *am* Peter Bloggins ! ’”

Oakhurst. But, my dear colonel, I——

Starbottle [*loftily*]. Say no more, sir ! I accept the—er—position. Let us see ! The gentleman will, on recognition, probably make a personal attack. You are armed. Ah, no ? Umph ! On reflection, I would not permit him to strike a single blow : I would anticipate it. It will provoke the challenge from him, leaving *you*, sir, the—er—choice of weapons.

Oakhurst. Hush ! he is moving ! Take your stand here, in this alcove. Remember, as a gentleman, and a man of honour, Col. Starbottle, I trust you not to interfere between

the injured man and—justice ! [*Pushes COL. STARBOTTLE into alcove behind couch, and approaches SANDY.*]

Sandy [*waking slowly—and incoherently*]. Hush ! Silky. Hush ! Eh ? Oh, hush yourself ! [*Sings.*]

Oh, yer's yer Sandy Morton,
Drink him down !

Eh ! Oh ! [*Half sits up on couch.*] Eh ! [*Looking around him.*] Where the devil am I ?

Oakhurst [*advancing and leaning over SANDY'S couch*]. In the house of your father, Alexander Morton.

Sandy [*recoiling in astonishment*]. His voice, John Oakhurst ! What—ah ! [*Rises, and rushes toward OAKHURST with uplifted hand.*]

Starbottle [*gesticulating in whisper*]. A blow ! a single blow would be sufficient.

Sandy [*looking at OAKHURST, who regards him calmly*]. I—eh ! I—eh ! Ha, ha ! I'm glad to see—old pard ! I'm glad to see ye ! [*COL. STARBOTTLE lifts his hand in amazement.*]

Oakhurst [*declining his hand*]. Do you understand me, Sandy Morton ? Listen. I am John Oakhurst,—the man who has deceived your father, who has deceived you.

Sandy [*without heeding his words, but regarding him affectionately*]. To think of it—Jack Oakhurst ! It's like him, like Jack. He was allers onsartain, the darned little cuss ! Jack ! Look at him, will ye, boys ? look at him ! Growed too, and dressed to kill, and sittin' in this yer house as natril as a jaybird ! [*Looking around.*] Nasty, ain't it, Jack ? and this yer's your house—the old man's house—eh ? Why, this is—this is where she came. Jack, Jack ! [*Eagerly.*] Tell me, pard,—where is she ?

Starbottle [*aside, rubbing his hands*]. We shall have it now !

Oakhurst. She has gone.—gone ! But hear me ! She

had deceived you as she has me. She has gone,—gone with her first husband, Henry Pritchard.

Sandy [*stupefied*]. Gone! Her first husband! Pritchard! *Oakhurst*. Aye, your wife!

Sandy. Oh, damn my wife! I'm talking of Mary—Miss Mary,—the little schoolma'am, Jack; the little rose of Poker Flat. Oh! I see—ye didn't know her, Jack,—the pertiest, sweetest little—

Oakhurst [*turning away coldly*]. Aye, aye! She is here!

Sandy [*looking after him affectionately*]. Look at him, boys! Allers the same,—high-toned, cold, even to his pardner! That's him,—Jack Oakhurst! But Jack, Jack, you're goin' to shake hands, ain't ye? [*Extends his hand, after a pause. OAKHURST takes it gloomily.*]

Col. Starbottle [*who has been regarding interview with visible scorn and disgust, advancing to OAKHURST.*] You will—er—pardon me if, under the—er—circumstances, I withdraw from this—er—disgraceful proceeding. The condonation, by that man, of two of the most tremendous offences to society and to the code, without apology or satisfaction, Ged, sir, is—er—er—of itself an insult to the spectator. I go, sir—

Oakhurst. But, Col. Starbottle—

Starbottle. Permit me to say, sir, that I hold myself for this, sir, responsible, sir,—personally responsible

[*Exit STARBOTTLE, glancing furiously at SANDY, who sinks on sofa laughing.*]

Oakhurst [*aside*]. He will change his mind in half an hour. But, in the mean time, time is precious. [*Aloud.*] Sandy, come!

Sandy [*rising with alacrity*]. Yes, Jack, I'm ready.

Oakhurst. We are going [*slowly and solemnly*]*—we are going to see your father.*

Sandy [*dropping back with bashful embarrassment, and struggling to release his arm from OAKHURST*]. No, Jack!

Not just yet, Jack ; in a little while, ole boy ! in about six months, or mebbe — a year, Jack ! not now, not now ! I ain't feelin' exactly well, Jack, — I ain't.

Oakhurst. Nonsense, Sandy ! Consider your duty and my honour.

Sandy [regaining his seat]. That's all very well, Jack ; but ye see, pard, you've known the old man for nigh on a year, and it's twenty-five since I met him. No, Jack ; you don't play any ole man on to me to-night, Jack. No, you and me'll just drop out for a *pascar*. Jack, eh ? [*Taking OAKHURST'S arm.*] Come !

Oakhurst. Impossible ! Hush ! [*Listening.*] It is *he* passing through the corridor. [*Goes to wing R., and listens.*]

Sandy [crowding hastily behind OAKHURST in alarm]. But, I say, Jack ! he won't come in here ? He's goin' to bed, you know. Eh ? It ain't right for a man o' his years — and he must be goin' on ninety, Jack — to be up like this. It ain't healthy.

Oakhurst. You know him not. He seems to need no rest [*sadly*]. Night after night, long after the servants are abed, and the house is still, I hear that step slowly pacing the corridor. It is the last sound as I close my eyes, the first challenge of the morning.

Sandy. The ol' scound — [*checking himself*] — I mean, Jack, the ol' man has suthin' on his mind. But, Jack [*in great alarm*], he don't waltz in upon ye, Jack ? He don't p'int them feet in yer, Jack ? Ye ain't got to put up with that, Jack, along o' yer other trials ?

Oakhurst. He often seeks me here. Ah — yes — he is coming this way now.

Sandy [in ludicrous terror]. Jack, pard, quick ! hide me somewhere, Jack !

Oakhurst [opening door R.]. In there, quick ! Not a sound, as you value your future ! [*Exit SANDY hurriedly R.*]

SCENE 2.—*The Same. Enter door R., OLD MORTON, in dressing-gown, with candle.*

Old Morton. Not abed yet, Alexander? Well, well, I don't blame you, my son: it has been for you a trying, trying night. Yes, I see: like me, you are a little nervous and wakeful. [*Slowly takes chair, and comfortably composes himself.*]

Oakhurst [aside]. He is in for a midnight gossip. How shall I dispose of Sandy?

Old Morton. Yes [*meditatively*],—yes, you have over-worked lately. Never mind. In a day or two more you shall have a vacation, sir,—a vacation!

Oakhurst [aside]. He knows not how truly he speaks. [*Aloud.*] Yes, sir, I was still up. I have only just now dismissed the policemen.

Old Morton. Ay. I heard voices, and saw a light in your window. I came to tell you, Alexander, Capper has explained all about—about the decoy! More; he has told me of your courage and your invaluable assistance. For a moment, sir,—I don't mind telling you now in confidence,—I doubted you——

Oakhurst [in feigned deprecation]. Oh, sir!

Old Morton. Only for a moment. You will find, Alexander, that even that doubt shall have full apology when the year of your probation has expired. Besides, sir, I know all.

Oakhurst [starting]. All!

Old Morton. Yes, the story about the Duchess and your child. You are surprised. Col. Starbottle told me all. I forgive you, Alexander, for the sake of your boy.

Oakhurst. My boy, sir!

Old Morton. Yes, your boy. And let me tell you, sir, he's a fine young fellow. Looks like you,—looks as you did when you were a boy. He's a Morton, too, every inch of him, there's no denying that. No, sir. *You* may have changed; but he—he—is the living image of my little

Alexander. He took to me, too, — lifted his little arms — and — and — [*Becomes affected, and leans his head in his hands.*]

Oakhurst [*rising*]. You are not well, sir. Let me lead you to your room.

Old Morton. No! It is nothing: a glass of water, Alexander!

Oakhurst [*aside*]. He is very pale. The agitation of the night has overcome him. [*Goes to table R.*] A little spirits will revive him. [*Pours from decanter in glass, and returns to Morton.*]

Old Morton [*after drinking*]. There was spirits in that water, Alexander. Five years ago, I vowed at your mother's grave to abandon the use of intoxicating liquors.

Oakhurst. Believe me, sir, my mother will forgive you.

Old Morton. Doubtless. It has revived me. I am getting to be an old man, Aleck. [*Holds out his glass half unconsciously, and OAKHURST replenishes it from decanter.*] Yes, an old man, Aleck; but the boy, — ah, I live again in him. The little rascal! He asked me, Aleck, for a "chaw tobacker!" and wanted to know if I was the "ol' duffer." Ha, ha! He did. Ha, ha! Come, come, don't be despondent. I was like you once, damn it, — ahem — it's all for the best, my boy, all for the best. I'll take the young rascal — [*aside*] damn it, he's already taken me — [*aloud*] on equal terms. There, Aleck, what do you say?

Oakhurst. Really, sir, this forbearance, — this kindness — [*aside*] I see a ray of light.

Old Morton. Nonsense! I'll take the boy, I tell you, and do well for him, — the little rascal! — as if he were the legal heir. But, I say, Aleck [*laughing*], ha, ha! — what about — ha, ha! — what about Doña Jovita, eh? and what about Don José Castro, eh? How will the lady like a ready-made family, eh? [*Poking OAKHURST in the ribs.*] What will the Don say to the family succession? Ha, ha!

Oakhurst [*proudly*]. Really, sir, I care but little.

Old Morton [*aside*]. Oh, ho! I'll sound him. [*Aloud.*] Look ye, Alexander, I have given my word to you and Don José Castro, and I'll keep it. But if you can do any better, eh — if — eh? — the schoolma'am's a mighty pretty girl and a bright one, eh, Aleck? And it's all in the family — eh? And she thinks well of you; and I will say, for a girl brought up as she's been, and knowin' your relations with the Duchess and the boy, to say a kind word for ye, Aleck, is a good sign, — you follow me, Aleck, — if you think — why, old Don José might whistle for a son-in-law, eh?

Oakhurst [*interrupting indignantly*]. Sir! [*Aside.*] Stop! [*Aloud.*] Do you mean to say, sir, that if I should consent to this — suggestion — that, if the lady were willing, *you* would offer no impediment?

Old Morton. Impediment, my dear boy! you should have my blessing.

Oakhurst. Pardon me a moment. You have in the last year, sir, taught me the importance of business formality in all the relations of life. Following that idea, the conditions of my engagement with Jovita Castro were drawn up with your hand. Are you willing to make this recantation as formal, this new contract as business-like and valid?

Old Morton [*eagerly*]. I am.

Oakhurst. Then sit here, and write at my dictation. [*Pointing to table L. OLD MORTON takes seat at table.*] “In view of the evident preferences of my son Alexander Morton, and of certain family interests, I hereby revoke my consent to his marriage with the Doña Jovita Castro, and accord him full permission to woo and win his cousin, Miss Mary Morris, promising him the same aid and assistance previously offered in his suit with Miss Castro.”

Old Morton. [*signing*]. Alexander Morton, sen. There, Aleck! You have forgotten one legal formality. We have no witness. Ha, ha!

Oakhurst [*significantly*]. I will be a sufficient witness.

Old Morton. Ha, ha ! [*Fills glass from decanter, after which OAKHURST quietly removes decanter beyond his reach.*] Very good ! Aleck, I've been thinking of a plan, — I've been thinking of retiring from the bank. I'm getting old, and my ways are not the popular ways of business here. I've been thinking of you, you dog, — of leaving the bank to you, — to you, sir, — eh — the day — the day you marry the school-ma'am — eh. I'll stay home, and take care of the boy — eh — hic ! The little rascal ! — lifted his arms to me — did, Aleck ! by God ! [*Incoherently.*] Eh !

Oakhurst. Hush ! [*Aside.*] Sandy will overhear him, and appear.

Old Morton [*greatly affected by liquor*]. Hush ! eh ! — of course — shoo ! shoo ! [*The actor will here endeavour to reproduce in OLD MORTON'S drunken behaviour, without exactly imitating him, the general characteristics of his son's intoxication.*] Eh — I say, Aleck, old boy ! what will the Don say ? eh ? Ha, ha, ha ! And Jovita, that firebrand, how will she — hic — like it, eh ? [*Laughs immoderately.*]

Oakhurst. Hush ! We will be overheard ! The servants, sir !

Old Morton. Damn the servants ! Don't I — hic — pay them wages — eh ?

Oakhurst. Let me lead you to your own room. You are nervously excited. A little rest, sir, will do you good. [*Taking his arm.*]

Old Morton. No shir, no shir, 'm nerrer goin' to bed any more. Bed's bad habit ! — hic — drunken habit. Lesh stay up all ni, Aleck ! You and me ! Lesh nev'r — go — bed any more ! Whar's whisky — eh ?

[*Staggers to the table for decanter as OAKHURST seizes him, struggle up stage, and then OLD MORTON, in struggle, falls helplessly on sofa, in same attitude as SANDY was discovered.*]

Enter SANDY cautiously from door L.

Sandy [to OAKHURST]. Jack ! Eh, Jack——

Oakhurst. Hush ! Go ! I will follow you in a moment.

[*Pushes him back to door L.*]

Sandy [*catching sight of OLD MORTON*]. Hallo ! What's up ?

Oakhurst. Nothing. He was overtaken with a sudden faintness. He will revive presently : go !

Sandy [*hesitating*]. I say, Jack, he wasn't taken sick along o' me, eh, Jack ?

Oakhurst. No ! No ! But go [*pushing him toward door*].

Sandy. Hold on : I'm going. But, Jack, I've got a kind of faintness yer, too. [*Goes to side-table, and takes up decanter.*] And thar's nothing reaches that faintness like whisky. [*Fills glass.*]

Old Morton [*drunkenly and half-consciously from couch*]. Whisky — who shed — whisky — eh ? Eh — O — gimme some, Aleck — Aleck, my son, — my son ! — my old prodigal — Old Proddy, my boy — gimme — whisky — [*sings*] —

Oh, yer's yer good old whisky,
Drink it down !

Eh ? I com — mand you — pass the whisky !

SANDY, at first panic-stricken, and then remorsefully conscious, throws glass down, with gesture of fear and loathing.

OAKHURST advances to his side hurriedly.

Oakhurst [*in hurried whisper*]. Give him the whisky, quick ! It will keep him quiet. [*Is about to take decanter when SANDY seizes it : struggle with OAKHURST.*]

Sandy [*with feeling*]. No, no, Jack, no ! [*Suddenly, with great strength and determination, breaks from him, and throws decanter from window.*] No, never !

Old Morton [*struggling drunkenly to his feet*]. Eh — who sh'd never ? [OAKHURST shoves SANDY in room L.,

and follows him, closing door.] Eh, Aleck? [Groping.] Eh, where'sh light? All gone. [Lapses on sofa again, after an ineffectual struggle to get up, and then resumes his old attitude.]

[Change scene quickly.]

SCENE 3.—*Ante-room in MR. MORTON'S villa. Front scene.*

Enter DON JOSÉ CASTRO and CONCHO, preceded by SERVANT, L.

Servant. This way, gentlemen.

Don José. Carry this card to Alexander Morton, sen.

Servant. Beg pardon, sir, but there's only one name here, sir *[looking at CONCHO]*.

Don José [proudly]. That is my servant, sir.

[Exit SERVANT.]

Don José [aside]. I don't half like this business. But my money locked up in his bank, and my daughter's hand bound to his son, demand it. *[Aloud.]* This is no child's play, Concho, you understand.

Concho. Ah! I am wise. Believe me, if I have not proofs which shall blanch the cheek of this old man, I am a fool, Don José.

Re-enter SERVANT.

Servant Mr. Morton, sen., passed a bad night, and has left word not to be disturbed this morning. But Mr. Morton, jun., will attend you, sir.

Concho [aside]. So the impostor will face it out. Well, let him come.

Don José [to SERVANT]. I wait his pleasure.

[Exit SERVANT.]

Don José. You hear, Concho? You shall face this man. I shall repeat to him all you have told me. If you fail to make good your charge, on your head rest the consequences.

Concho. He will of course deny. He is a desperate man: he will perhaps attack me. Eh! Ah! [*Drawing revolver.*]

Don José. Put up your foolish weapon. The sight of the father he has deceived will be more terrible to him than the pistol of the spy.

Enter COL. STARBOTTLE, C.

Starbottle. Mr. Alexander Morton, jun., will be with you in a moment. [*Takes attitude by door, puts his hand in his breast, and inflates himself.*]

Concho [*to DON JOSÉ, aside*]. It is the bullying lawyer. They will try to outface us, my patron; but we shall triumph. [*Aloud.*] He comes, eh! — Mr. Alexander Morton, gentlemen! I will show you a cheat, an impostor!

Enter, in correct, precise morning dress, SANDY MORTON.
There is in his make-up and manner a suggestion of the father.

Concho [*recoiling, aside*]. Diego! The real son! [*Aloud, furiously.*] It is a trick to defeat justice,—eh! — a miserable trick! But it shall fail, it shall fail!

Col. Starbottle. Permit me, a moment,—a single moment. [*To CONCHO.*] You have —er—er— characterised my introduction of this —er— gentleman as a “cheat” and an “imposture.” Are you prepared to deny that this is Alexander Morton?

Don José [*astonished, aside*]. These Americanos are of the Devil! [*Aloud and sternly.*] Answer him, Concho, I command you.

Concho [*in half-insane rage*]. It is Alexander Morton; but it is a trick,—a cowardly trick! Where is the other impostor, this Mr. John Oakhurst?

Sandy [*advancing with dignity and something of his father's cold manner*]. He will answer for himself, when called for. [*To DON JOSÉ.*] You have asked for me, sir: may I inquire your business?

Concho. Eh ! It is a trick,—a trick !

Don José [*to CONCHO*]. Silence, sir ! [*To SANDY, with dignity.*] I know not the meaning of this masquerade. I only know that you are *not* the gentleman hitherto known to me as the son of Alexander Morton. I am here, sir, to demand my rights as a man of property and a father. I have received this morning a cheque from the house of Morton & Son, for the amount of my deposit with them. So far—in view of this complication—it is well. Who knows ? *Bueno !* But the signature of Morton & Son to the cheque is not in the handwriting I have known. Look at it, sir. [*To SANDY* [*handing cheque*].

Sandy [*examining cheque*]. It is my handwriting, sir, and was signed this morning. Has it been refused ?

Don José. Pardon me, sir. It has not been presented. With this doubt in my mind, I preferred to submit it first to you.

Starbottle. A moment, a single moment, sir. While as a—er—gentleman and a man of honour, I—er—appreciate your motives, permit me to say, sir, as a lawyer, that your visit is premature. On the testimony of your own witness, the identification of Mr. Alexander Morton, jun., is—er—complete ; he has admitted the signature as his own ; you have not yet presented the cheque to the bank.

Don José. Pardon me, Col. Starbottle. It is not all. [*To SANDY.*] By a written agreement with Alexander Morton, sen., the hand of my daughter is promised to his son, who now stands before me as my former servant, dismissed from my service for drunkenness.

Sandy. That agreement is revoked.

Don José. Revoked !

Sandy [*handing paper*]. Cast your eyes over that paper. At least you will recognize *that* signature.

Don José [*reads*]. “ In view of the evident preferences of my son Alexander Morton, and of certain family interests, I

hereby revoke my consent to his marriage with the Doña Jovita Castro, and accord him full permission to woo and win his cousin, Miss Mary Morris ; promising him the same aid and assistance previously offered in his suit with Miss Castro.—ALEXANDER MORTON, SEN."

Concho. Ah ! *Carramba !* Do you not see the trick,—eh, the conspiracy ? It was this man, as Diego, your daughter's groom, helped his friend Mr. Oakhurst to the heiress. Ah, you comprehend ! It was an old trick ! You shall see, you shall see ! Ah ! I am wise, I am wise !

Don José [aside]. Could I have been deceived ? But no ! This paper that releases *him* gives the impostor no claim.

Sandy [resuming his old easy manner, dropping his formality, and placing his hand on DON JOSÉ'S shoulder]. Look yar, ole man ; I didn't allow to ever see ye agin, and this yer ain't none o' *my* seekin'. But, since yer here, I don't mind tellin' ye that but for me that gal of yours would have run away a year ago, and married an unknown lover. And I don't mind adding, that, hed I known that unknown lover was my friend John Oakhurst, I'd have helped her do it. [*Going.*] Good-morning, Don José.

Don José. Insolent ! I shall expect an account for this from your—father, sir.

Sandy. Adios, Don José.

[*Exit C.*

Concho. It is a trick — I told you. Ah, I am wise ! [*Going to DON JOSÉ.*]

Don José [throwing him off]. Fool ! [*Exit DON JOSÉ.*

Concho [infuriated]. Eh ! Fool yourself—dotard ! No matter : I will expose all—ah ! I will see Jovita ;—I will revenge myself on this impostor ! [*Is about to follow, when COL. STARBOTTLE leaves his position by the door, and touches CONCHO on the shoulder.*]

Starbottle. Excuse me.

Concho. Eh ?

Starbottle. You have forgotten something.

Concho. Something?

Starbottle. An apology, sir. You were good enough to express — er — incredulity — when I presented Mr. Morton : you were kyind enough to characterize the conduct of my — er — principal by — an epithet. You have alluded to me, sir, — ME —

Concho [*wrathfully*]. Bully ! [*Aside.*] I have heard that this *pomposo*, this braggart, is a Yankee trick too ; that he has the front of a lion, the liver of the chicken. [*Aloud.*] Yes, I have said, you hear I have said, I, CONCHO [*striking his breast*], have said you are a — bully !

Starbottle [*coolly*]. Then you are prepared to give me satisfaction, sir, — personal satisfaction.

Concho [*raging*]. Yes, sir, now — you understand, now [*taking out pistol*], anywhere, here ! Yes, here ! Ah ! you start, — yes, here and now ! Face to face, you understand, without seconds, — face to face. So ! [*Presenting pistol.*]

Starbottle [*quietly*]. Permit me to — er — apologize.

Concho. Ah ! It is too late !

Starbottle [*interrupting*]. Excuse me, but I feared you would not honour me so completely and satisfactorily. Ged, sir, I begin to respect you ! I accede to all your propositions of time and position. The pistol you hold in your hand is a derringer, I presume, loaded. Ah — er — I am right. The one I now produce [*showing pistol*] is — er — as you will perceive, the same size and pattern, and — er — unloaded. We will place them both, so, under the cloth of this table. You shall draw one pistol, I will take the other. I will put that clock at ten minutes to nine, when we will take our positions across this table ; as you — er — happily express it, “face to face.” As the clock strikes the hour, we will fire on the second stroke.

Concho [*aside*]. It is a trick, a Yankee trick ! [*Aloud.*] I am ready. Now — at once !

Starbottle [*gravely*]. Permit me, sir, to thank you. Your conduct, sir, reminds me of singular incident —

Concho [*angrily interrupting*]. Come, come! It is no child's play. We have much of this talk, eh! It is action—eh, you comprehend?—action.

[*STARBOTTLE places pistols under the cloth, and sets clock. CONCHO draws pistol from cloth; STARBOTTLE takes remaining pistol. Both men assume position, presenting their weapons; STARBOTTLE pompously but seriously, CONCHO angrily and nervously.*]

Starbottle [*after a pause*]. One moment, a single moment——

Concho. Ah, a trick! Coward! you cannot destroy my aim.

Starbottle. I overlook the—er—epithet. I wished only to ask, if you should be—er—unfortunate, if there was anything I could say to your—er—friends.

Concho. You cannot make the fool of me, coward. No!

Starbottle. My object was only precautionary. Owing to the position in which you—er—persist in holding your weapon, in a line with my right eye, I perceive that a ray of light enters the nipple, and—er—illuminates the barrel. I judge from this, that you have been unfortunate enough to draw the—er—er—unloaded pistol.

Concho [*tremulously lowering weapon*]. Eh! Ah! This is murder! [*Drops pistol.*] Murder!—eh—help [*retreating*], help! [*Exit hurriedly door C., as clock strikes. COL. STARBOTTLE lowers his pistol, and moves with great pomposity to the other side of the table, taking up pistol.*]

Starbottle [*examining pistol*]. Ah! [*Lifts it, and discharges it.*] It seems that I am mistaken. [*Going.*] The pistol was—er—loaded! [*Exit.*]

SCENE 4.—*Front scene. Room in villa. Enter MISS MARY and JOVITA.*

Miss Mary. I tell you, you are wrong. You are not only misunderstanding your lover, which is a woman's privilege;

but you are abusing my cousin, which, as his relative, I won't put up with.

Jovita [*passionately*]. But hear me, Miss Mary. It is a year since we were betrothed; and such a betrothal! Why, I was signed, sealed, and delivered to him, on conditions, as if I were a part of the rancho; and the very night, too, I had engaged to run away with him! And during that year I have seen the gentleman twice,—yes, twice!

Miss Mary. But he has written?

Jovita. Mother of God! Yes,—letters delivered by my father, sent to *his care*, read by him first, of course; letters hoping that I was well, and obeying my father's commands; letters assuring me of his unaltered devotion; letters that, compared with the ones he used to hide in the confessional of the ruined Mission church, were as ice to fire, were as that snow-flower you value so much, Mary, to this mariposa blossom I wear in my hair. And then to think that this man—this John Oakhurst, as I knew him; this man who used to ride twenty miles for a smile from me on the church porch; this Don Juan who leaped that garden wall (fifteen feet, Mary, if it is an inch), and made old Concho his stepping-stone, this man, who daily perilled death for my sake—is changed into this formal, methodical man of business—is—is—I tell you there's a *woman* at the bottom of it! I know it sure!

Miss Mary [*aside*]. How can I tell her about the Duchess? I won't! [*Aloud*.] But listen, my dear Jovita. You know he is under probation for you, Jovita. All this is for you. His father is cold, methodical, unsympathetic. *He* looks only to his bond with this son,—this son that he treats, even in matters of the heart, as a *business* partner. Remember, on his complete reformation, and subjection to his father's will, depends your hand. Remember the agreement!

Jovita. The agreement; yes! It is the agreement, always the agreement. May the Devil fly away with the

agreement ! Look you, Miss Mary, I, Doña Jovita, didn't fall in love with an agreement : it was with a man ! Why, I might have married a dozen agreements — yes, of a shorter limitation than this ! [*Crossing.*]

Miss Mary. Yes. But what if your lover had failed to keep those promises by which he was to gain your hand ? what if he were a man incapable of self-control ? what if he were — a — a — drunkard !

Jovita [*musings*]. A drunkard ! [*Aside.*] There was Diego, he was a drunkard ; but he was faithless. [*Aloud.*] You mean a weak, faithless drunkard ?

Miss Mary. No ! [*Sadly.*] Faithless only to himself, but devoted — yes, devoted to *you*.

Jovita. Miss Mary, I have found that one big vice in a man is apt to keep out a great many smaller ones.

Miss Mary. Yes ; but if he were a slave to liquor ?

Jovita. My dear, I should try to change his mistress. Oh, give me a man that is capable of a devotion to any thing, rather than a cold, calculating average of all the virtues !

Miss Mary [*aside*]. I, who aspire to be her teacher, am only her pupil. [*Aloud.*] But what if, in this very drunkenness, this recklessness, he had once loved and worshipped another woman ? What if you discovered all this after — after — he had won your heart ?

Jovita. I should adore him ! Ah, Miss Mary ! Love differs from all the other contagious diseases : the last time a man is exposed to it, he takes it most readily, and has it the worst ! But you, *you*, you cannot sympathise with me. You have some lover, the ideal of the virtues ; some man as correct, as well regulated, as calm as — yourself ; some one who addresses you in the fixed morality and severe penmanship of the copy-books. He will never precipitate himself over a garden wall or through a window. Your Jacob will wait for you through seven years, and receive you from the hands

of your cousin and guardian — as a reward of merit ! No, you could not love a vagabond.

Miss Mary [*very slowly and quietly*]. No ?

Jovita. No ! [*Passionately*.] No, it is impossible ! Forgive me, Miss Mary : you are good ; a better girl than I am. But think of me ! A year ago my lover leaped a wall at midnight to fly with me : to-day, the day that gives me to him, he writes a few cold lines, saying that he has business, *business* — you understand — business, and that he shall not see me until we meet in the presence of — of — of — our fathers.

Miss Mary. Yes ; but you will see him, at least, perhaps alone. Listen : it is no formal meeting, but one of festivity. My guardian has told me, in his quaint scriptural way, it is the killing of the fatted calf over his long-lost prodigal. Have patience, little one. Ah ! Jovita, we are of a different race, but we are of one sex ; and as a woman I know how to accept another woman's abuse of her lover. Come, come !

[*Exeunt* MISS MARY and JOVITA.]

SCENE 5. — *The drawing-room of MR. MORTON'S villa.*

Large open arch in centre, leading to veranda, looking on distant view of San Francisco ; richly furnished, — sofas, arm-chairs, and tête-à-têtes. Enter COL. STARBOTTLE, C., carrying bouquet, preceded by SERVANT, bowing.

Starbottle. Take my kyard to Miss Morris.

[*Exit* SERVANT.]

Starbottle. Star ! This is the momentous epoch of your life ! It is a moment for which you — are — I may say alone responsible, — personally responsible ! She will be naturally gratified by the — er — flowers. She will at once recognise this bouquet as a delicate *souvenir* of Red Gulch, and will appreciate your recollection. And the fact, the crushing fact, that you have overlooked the — er — ungentlemanly conduct of her *own* cousin Sandy, the real Alexander Morton, that

you have — er — assisted to restore the *ex-vaquero* to his rights, will — er — er — at once open the door to — er — mutual confidence and — er — a continuance of that — er — prepossession I have already noticed. Ahem ! here she is.

Enter MISS MARY in full dress.

Miss Mary. You are early, Col. Starbottle. This promptitude does honour to our poor occasion.

Col. Starbottle. Ged, Miss Mary, promptness with a lady and an adversary is the first duty of — er — gentlemen. I wished that — er — the morning dew might still be — er — fresh in these flowers. I gathered them myself [*presenting bouquet*] at — er — er — flower-stand in the — er — California market.

Miss Mary [*aside*]. Flowers ! I needed no such reminder of poor Sandy. [*Aloud.*] I thank you, colonel.

Starbottle. Ged, ma'am, I am repaid doubly. Your conduct, Miss Mary, reminds me of little incident that occurred at Richmond, in '53. Dinner-party — came early — but obliged to go — as now — on important business, before desert — before dessert. Lady sat next to me — beautiful woman — excuse me if I don't mention names — said to me, "Star," — always called me Star, — "Star, you remind me of the month of May." — "Ged, madam," — I said, "delighted, proud ; but why?" — "Because," she said, "you come in with the — er — oysters" — No ! Ged, pardon me — ridiculous mistake ! I mean — er — "you come in with the — er — flowers, and go before the — er — fruits."

Miss Mary. Ah ! colonel ! I appreciate her disappointment. Let us hope, however, that some day you may find that happy woman who will be able to keep you through the whole dinner and the whole season, until December and the ices !

Starbottle. Ged ! excellent ! Capital ! [*Seriously.*] Miss Mary ! [*Suddenly inflating his chest, striking attitude, and*

gazing on MISS MARY with languishing eyes.] There is — er — such a woman !

Miss Mary [aside]. What can he mean ?

Starbottle [taking seat beside her]. Allow me, Miss Mary, a few moments of confidential — er — confidential disclosure. To-day is, as you are aware — the day on which, according to — er — agreement between parties, my friend and client Mr. Morton, sen., — formally accepts his prodigal son. It is my — er — duty to state that — er — the gentleman who has for the past year occupied that position has behaved with great discretion, and — er — fulfilled his part of the — er — agreement. But it would — er — appear that there has been a — er — slight delusion regarding the identity of that prodigal, — a delusion shared by all the parties except, perhaps, myself. I have to prepare you for a shock. The gentleman whom you have recently known as Alexander Morton, jun. is not the prodigal son ; is not your — er — cousin ; is, in fact, no relation to you. Prepare yourself, Miss Mary, for a little disappointment, — for — er — degradation. The genuine son has been — er — discovered in the person of — er — low menial — er — vagabond, — “Sandy,” the — er — outcast of Red Gulch !

Miss Mary [rising in astonishment]. Sandy ! Then he was right. [*Aside.*] The child is his ! and that woman —

Starbottle. Compose yourself, Miss Mary. I know the — er — effect of — er — revelation like this upon — er — proud and aristocratic nature. Ged ! My own, I assure you, beats in — er — responsive indignation. You can never consent to remain beneath this roof, and — er — receive a — er — vagabond and — er — menial on equal terms. The — er — necessities of my — er — profession may — er — compel me ; but you — er — never ! Holding myself — er — er — responsible for having introduced you here, it is my — er — duty to provide you with — another home ! It is my — er — duty to protect —

Miss Mary [*aside*]. Sandy here, and beneath this roof ! Why has he not sought me ? Ah, I know too well : he dare not face me with his child !

Starbottle [*aside*]. She turns away ! it is maiden coyness. [*Aloud.*] If, Miss Mary, the — er — devotion of a life-time ; if the — er — chivalrous and respectful adoration of a man — er — whose record is — er — not unknown in the Court of Honour [*dropping on one knee with excessive gallantry*] ; if the — er — measure —

Miss Mary [*oblivious of COL. STARBOTTLE*]. I *will* — I *must* see him ! Ah ! [*looking L.*] he is coming !

Enter SANDY.

Starbottle [*rising with great readiness and tact*]. I have found it [*presenting flower*]. It had fallen beneath the sofa.

Sandy [*to MISS MARY, stopping short in embarrassment*]. I did not know you—I—I—thought there was no one here.

Miss Mary [*to STARBOTTLE*]. May I ask you to excuse me for a moment ? I have a few words to say to—to my *cousin* !

STARBOTTLE bows gallantly to MISS MARY, and stiffly to SANDY, and exit R. A long pause ; MISS MARY remains seated, pulling flowers, SANDY remains standing by wing, foolish and embarrassed. *Business.*

Miss Mary. [*impatiently*]. Well ?

Sandy [*slowly*]. I axes your pardon, miss ; but you told *that* gentleman you had a few words—to say to me.

Miss Mary [*passionately, aside*]. Fool ! [*Aloud.*] I had ; but I am waiting to first answer your inquiries about your—your—child. I have fulfilled my trust, sir.

Sandy. You have, Miss Mary, and I thank you.

Miss Mary. I might perhaps have expected that this revelation of our kinship would have come from other lips than a stranger's ; but—no matter ! I wish you joy, sir, of your

heritage. [*Going.*] You have found a home, sir, at last, for yourself and — and — your child. Good-day, sir.

Sandy. Miss Mary !

Miss Mary. I must make ready to receive your father's guests. It is his orders : I am only his poor relation. Good-bye, sir. [*Exit L.*]

Sandy [*watching her*]. She is gone ! — gone ! No ! She has dropped on the sofa in the ante-room, and is crying. Crying ! I promised Jack I wouldn't speak until the time came. I'll go back. [*Hesitating, and looking toward L.*] Poor girl ! How she must hate me ! I might just say a word, one word to thank her for her kindness to Johnny, — only one word, and then go away. I — I — can keep from liquor I swore I would to Jack, that night I saw the old man — drunk, — and I have. But — I can't keep — from — her. No — damn it ! [*Going toward L.*] No ! — I'll go ! [*Exit L.*]

Enter hurriedly and excitedly JOVITA R., followed by MANUELA.

Jovita. Where is she ? Where is *he* ? — the traitor !

Manuela [*entreatingly*]. Compose yourself, Doña Jovita for the love of God ! This is madness : believe me, there is some mistake. It is some trick of an enemy, — of that ingrate, that *coyote*, Concho, who hates the Don Alexandro.

Jovita. A trick ! Call you this a trick ? Look at this paper, put into my hands by my father a moment ago. Read it. Ah ! listen. [*Reads.*] “In view of the *evident preferences* of my son Alexander Morton, I hereby revoke my consent to his marriage with the Doña Jovita Castro, and accord him full permission to woo and win his cousin, Miss Mary Morris !” Call you this a trick, eh ? No, it is their perfidy ! This is why *she* was brought here on the eve of my betrothal. This accounts for his silence, his absence. Oh, I shall go mad !

Manuela. Compose yourself, miss. If I am not deceived, there is one here who will aid us, — who will expose this deceit. Listen : an hour ago, as I passed through the hall, I saw Diego, our old Diego, — your friend and confident, Diego.

Jovita. The drunkard—the faithless Diego !

Manuela. Never, Miss Jovita ; not drunken ! For, as he passed before me, he was as straight, as upright, as fine as your lover. Come, miss, we will seek him.

Jovita. Never ! He, too, is a traitor.

Manuela. Believe me, no ! Come, Miss Jovita. [*Looking toward L.*] See, he is there. Some one is with him.

Jovita [*looking*]. You are right ; and it is *she* — *she*, Miss Mary ! What ? he is kissing her hand ! and she — *she*, the double traitress — drops her head upon his shoulder ! Oh, this is infamy !

Manuela. Hush ! Some one is coming. The guests are arriving. They must not see you thus. This way, Miss Jovita,—this way. After a little, a little, the mystery will be explained. [*Taking JOVITA'S hand, and leading her R.*]

Jovita [*going*]. And this was the correct schoolmistress, the preceptress and example of all the virtues ! ha ! [*laughing hysterically*] ha ! [*Exeunt JOVITA and MANUELA.*]

SCENE 6. — *The same.* Enter SERVANT ; opens folding-doors C., revealing veranda, and view of distant city beyond. Stage, fog effect from without. Enter STARBOTTLE and OAKHURST, R., in full evening dress.

Starbottle [*walking towards veranda*]. A foggy evening for our anniversary.

Oakhurst. Yes. [*Aside.*] It was such a night as this I first stepped into Sandy's place, I first met the old man. Well, it will be soon over. [*Aloud.*] You have the papers and transfers all ready ?

Starbottle. In my — ci — pocket. Mr. Morton, sen., should be here to receive his guests.

Oakhurst. He will be here presently : until then the duty devolves on me ! He has secluded himself even from me [*Aside.*] Perhaps it is in very shame for his recent weakness.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Don José Castro, Miss Castro, and Miss Morris.

Enter DON JOSÉ with JOVITA and MISS MARY on either arm. All formally salute MR. OAKHURST, except MISS JOVITA, who turns coldly away, taking seat remotely on sofa. COL. STARBOTTLE gallantly approaches MISS MARY, and takes seat beside her.

Oakhurst [aside]. They are here to see my punishment. There is no sympathy even in her eyes.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Concepcion Garcia and Mr. Capper.

Concho [approaching OAKHURST, rubbing his hands]. I wish you joy, Mr. Alexander Morton !

Oakhurst [excitedly, aside]. Shall I throw him from the window ! The dog ! — even he !

Capper [approaching MR. OAKHURST]. You have done well. Be bold. I will see you through. As for *that* man [*pointing to CONCHO*], leave him to me ! [*Lays his hand on CONCHO'S shoulder, and leads him to sofa R.* OAKHURST takes seat in chair L. as SANDY enters quietly from door L., and stands leaning upon his chair.

Starbottle [rising]. Ladies and gentlemen, we are waiting only for the presence of Mr. Alexander Morton, sen. I regret to say that for the last twenty-four hours — he has been — er — exceedingly preoccupied with the momentous cares of the — er — occasion. You who know the austere habits o' my friend and — er — client will probably under-

stand that he may be at this very moment engaged in prayerful and Christian meditation, invoking the Throne of Grace, previous to the solemn duties of — er — er — to-night.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Alexander Morton, sen.

Enter OLD MORTON, drunk, in evening costume, cravat awry, coat half buttoned up, and half surly, half idiotic manner. All rise in astonishment. SANDY starts forward. OAK-HURST pulls him back.

Morton [thickly]. Don't rish ! Don't rish ! We'll all sit down ! How do you do, sir ? I wish ye well, miss. [*Goes around and laboriously shakes hands with everybody.*] Now lesh all take a drink ! lesh you take a drink, and you take a drink, and you take a drink !

Starbottle. Permit me, ladies and gentlemen, to — er — explain : our friend is — er — evidently labouring under — er — er — accident of hospitality ! In a moment he will be himself.

Old Morton. Hush up ! Dry up — yourself — old turkey-cock ! Eh !

Sandy [despairingly]. He will not understand us ! [*To STARBOTTLE.*] He will not know me ! What is to be done ?

Old Morton. Give me some wishky. Lesh all take a drink ! [*Enter SERVANT with decanter and glasses.*]

Old Morton [starting forward]. Lesh all take a drink !

Sandy. Stop !

Old Morton [recovering himself slightly]. Who says stop ? Who dares countermand my ordersh ?

Concho [coming forward]. Who ? I will tell you : eh ! eh ! Diego — dismissed from the rancho of Don José for drunkenness ! Sandy — the vagabond of Red Gulch !

Sandy [passionately seizing OLD MORTON'S arm]. Yes, Diego — Sandy — the outcast — but, God help me ! no longer

the drunkard. I forbid you to touch that glass! — I, your son, Alexander Morton! Yes, look at me, father: I, with drunkenness in my blood, planted by you, fostered by you — I whom you sought to save — I — I, stand here to save you! Go! [*To SERVANT.*] Go! While he is thus, I — I, am master here!

Old Morton [*cowed and frightened*]. That voice! [*Passing his hand over his forehead.*] Am I dreaming? Aleck, where are you? Alexander, speak, I command you: is this the truth?

Oakhurst [*slowly*]. It is!

Starbottle. One moment — a single moment: permit me to — er — er — explain. The gentleman who has just — er — dismissed the refreshment is, to the best of my legal knowledge, your son. The gentleman who for the past year has so admirably filled the functions of that office is — er — prepared to admit this. The proofs are — er — conclusive. It is with the — er — intention of offering them, and — er — returning your lawful heir, that we — er — are here to-night.

Old Morton [*rising to his feet*]. And I renounce you both! Out of my house, out of my sight, out of my heart, forever! Go! liars, swindlers, confederates! Drunk —

Oakhurst [*retiring slowly with SANDY*]. We are going, sir!

Old Morton. Go! open the doors there *wide*, wide enough for such a breadth of infamy! Do you hear me? I am master here!

Stands erect, as OAKHURST and SANDY, hand in hand, slowly retreat backward to centre, — then suddenly utters a cry, and falls heavily on sofa. Both pause: OAKHURST remains quiet and motionless; SANDY, after a moment's hesitation, rushes forward, and falls at his feet.

Sandy. Father, forgive me!

Old Morton [*putting his hand round SANDY'S neck, and*

motioning him to door]. Go ! both of you, both of you !
[*Resisting SANDY'S attempt to rise*]. Did you hear me ? Go !

Starbottle. Permit me to — explain. Your conduct, Mr. Morton, reminds me of sing'lar incident in '47 —

Old Morton. Silence !

Oakhurst. One word, Mr. Morton ! Shamed and disgraced as I am, I leave this roof more gladly than I entered it. How I came here, you best know. How I yielded madly to the temptation, the promise of a better life ; how I fell, through the hope of reformation, — no one should know better than you, sir, the reformer. I do not ask your pardon. You know that I did my duty to you as your presumed son. Your real son will bear witness, that, from the hour I knew of his existence, I did my duty equally to him. Col. Starbottle has all the legal transfers and papers necessary to make the restoration of your son — the integrity of your business name -- complete. I take nothing out of this life that I did not bring in it, — except my self-respect ! I go — as I came — alone !

Jovita [rushing towards him]. No ! no ! You shall take me ! I have wronged you, Jack, cruelly ; I have doubted you ; but you shall not go alone. I care not for this contract ! You are more to me, by your own right, Jack, than by any kinship with such as these !

Oakhurst [raising her gently]. I thank you, darling. But it is too late now. To be more worthy of you, to win *you*, I waived the title I had to you in my own manhood, to borrow another's more legal claim. I, who would not win you as a gambler, cannot make you now the wife of a convicted impostor. No ! Hear me, darling ! do not make my disgrace greater than it is. In the years to come, Jovita, think of me as one who loved you well enough to go through shame to win you, but too well to ask you to share with him that shame. Farewell, darling, farewell ! [*Releases himself from JOVITA'S arms, who falls beside him.*]

Concho [rubbing his hands, and standing before him]. Oho! Mr. John Oakhurst — eh — was it for this, eh — you leaped the garden wall, eh? was it for this you struck me down, eh? You are not wise, eh? You should have run away with the Doña when you could — ah, ah, impostor!

Sandy [leaping to his feet]. Jack, you shall not go! I will go with you!

Oakhurst. No! Your place is there. [Pointing to OLD MORTON, whose head has sunk drunkenly on his breast.] Heed not this man; his tongue carries only the borrowed lash of his master.

Concho. Eh! you are bold now—bold; but I said I would have revenge—ah, revenge!

Sandy [rushing towards him]. Coward?

Don José. Hold your hand, sir! Hold! I allow no one to correct my menials but myself. Concho, order my carriage!

Concho. It is ready, sir.

Don José. Then lead the way to it, for my daughter and her husband, John Oakhurst.—Good night, Mr. Morton. I can sympathise with you; for we have both found a son. I am willing to exchange my dismissed servant for your dismissed partner.

Starbottle [advancing]. Ged, sir, I respect you! Ged, sir, permit me, sir, to grasp that honourable hand!

Old Morton [excitedly]. He is right, my partner! What have I done! The house of Morton & Son dissolved. The man known as my partner—a fugitive! No, Alexander!

Starbottle. One moment—a single moment! As a lawyer, permit me to say, sir, that the whole complication may be settled, sir, by the—er—addition of—er—single letter! The house of Morton & Son shall hereafter read Morton & Sons. The papers for the legal adoption of Mr. Oakhurst are—er—in my pocket.

Old Morton [more soberly]. Have it your own way!

Morton & Sons be it. Hark ye, Don José! We are equal at last. But — hark ye, Aleck! How about the boy, eh? — my grandson, eh? Is this one of the sons by adoption?

Sandy [embarrassedly]. It is my own, sir.

Capper [advancing]. He can with safety claim it, for the mother is on her way to Australia with her husband.

Old Morton. And the schoolma'am, eh?

Miss Mary. She will claim the usual year of probation for your prodigal, and then —

Sandy. God bless ye, Miss Mary!

Old Morton. I am in a dream! But the world — my friends — my patrons — how can I explain?

Starbottle. I will — er — explain. [Advancing slowly to front — to audience.] One moment — er — a single moment! If anything that has — er — transpired this evening — might seem to you, ladies and gentlemen — er — morally or — er — legally — or honourably to require — er — apology or — er — explanation! — permit me to say — that I — Col. Culpepper Starbottle, hold myself responsible — er — personally responsible.

Capper.

Concho.

Old Morton. *Sandy*. *Miss Mary*. *Don José*. *Jovita*. *Oakhurst*.
Col. Starbottle.

[Curtain.]

THE END.

POEMS

By BRET HARTE.

RAMON.

REFUGIO MINE, NORTHERN MEXICO.

DRUNK and senseless in his place,
Prone and sprawling on his face,
More like brute than any man
 Alive or dead,—
By his great pump out of gear,
Lay the peon engineer,
Waking only just to hear,
 Overhead,
Angry tones that called his name,
Oaths and cries of bitter blame—
Woke to hear all this, and waking, turned and fled !

“To the man who'll bring to me,”
Cried Intendant Harry Lee,—
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine,—
“Bring the sot alive or dead,
I will give to him,” he said,
“Fifteen hundred *pesos* down,
Just to set the rascal's crown
Underneath this heel of mine :
 Since but death
Deserves the man whose deed,
Be it vice or want of heed,
Stops the pumps that give us breath,—
Stops the pumps that suck the death
From the poisoned lower levels of the mine !”

No one answered, for a cry
 From the shaft rose up on high ;
 And shuffling, scrambling, tumbling from below,
 Came the miners, each the bolder
 Mounting on the weaker's shoulder.
 Grappling, clinging to their hold or
 Letting go,
 As the weaker gasped and fell
 From the ladder to the well,—
 To the poisoned pit of hell
 Down below !

“To the man who sets them free,”
 Cried the foreman, Harry Lee,—
 Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine,—
 “Brings them out and sets them free,
 I will give that man,” said he,
 “Twice that sum, who with a rope
 Face to face with death shall cope.
 Let him come who dares to hope !”
 “Hold your peace !” some one replied,
 Standing by the foreman's side ;
 “There has one already gone, whoe'er he be !”

Then they held their breath with awe,
 Pulling on the rope, and saw
 Fainting figures reappear,
 On the black rope swinging clear,
 Fastened by some skilful hand from below ;
 Till a score the level gained,
 And but one alone remained,—
 He the hero and the last,
 He whose skilful hand made fast
 The long line that brought them back to hope and
 cheer !

Haggard, gasping, down dropped he
At the feet of Harry Lee,—
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine :
“I have come,” he gasped, “to claim
Both rewards. Señor, my name
Is Ramon !
I’m the drunken engineer,—
I’m the coward. Señor—” Here
He fell over, by that sign
Dead as stone :

FOR THE KING

NORTHERN MEXICO.

1640.

As you look from the plaza at Leon, west
You can see her house, but the view is best
From the porch of the church where she lies at rest,

Where much of her past still lives, I think,
In the scowling brows and sidelong blink
Of the worshipping throng that rise or sink

To the waxen saints that, yellow and lank,
Lean out from their niches, rank on rank,
With a bloodless Saviour on either flank ;

In the gouty pillars, whose cracks begin
To show the *adobe* core within,—
A soul of earth in a whitewashed skin.

And I think that the moral of all, you'll say,
Is the sculptured legend that moulds away
On a tomb in the choir : "Por el Rey."

"Por el Rey." Well, the king is gone,
Ages ago, and the Hapsburg one
Shot—but the rock of the church lives on.

"Por el Rey." What matters, indeed,
If king or president succeed
To a country haggard with sloth and greed,

As long as one granary is fat,
And yonder priest, in a shovel hat,
Peeps out from the bin like a sleek brown rat !

What matters? Naught, if it serves to bring
The legend nearer,—no other thing,—
We'll spare the moral, "Live the King !"

Two hundred years ago, they say,
The viceroy, Marquis of Monte-Rey,
Rode, with his retinue, that way.

Grave as befitted Spain's grandee,
Grave as the substitute should be
Of His Most Catholic Majesty,

Yet, from his black plume's curving grace
To his slim, black gauntlet's smaller space,
Exquisite as a piece of lace !

Two hundred years ago—e'en so—
The marquis stopped where the lime-trees blow,
While Leon's seneschal bent him low

And begged that the marquis would that night take
His humble roof for the royal sake,
And then, as the custom demanded, spake

The usual wish that his guest would hold
The house, and all that it might infold,
As his—with the bride scarce three days old.

Be sure that the marquis, in his place,
Replied to all with the measured grace
Of chosen speech and unmoved face,

Nor raised his head till his black plume swept
The hem of the lady's robe, who kept
Her place, as her husband backward stepped.

And then (I know not how nor why)
A subtle flame in the lady's eye—
Unseen by the courtiers standing by—

Burned through his lace and titled wreath,
Burned through his body's jeweled sheath,
Till it touched the steel of the man beneath !

(And yet, mayhap, no more was meant
Than to point a well-worn compliment,
And the lady's beauty, her worst intent.)

Howbeit, the marquis bowed again :
"Who rules with awe well serveth Spain,
But best whose law is love made plain."

Be sure that night no pillow prest
The seneschal, but with the rest
Watched,—as was due a royal guest,—

Watched from the wall till he saw the square
Fill with the moonlight, white and bare,—
Watched till he saw two shadows fare

Out from his garden, where the shade
That the old church-tower and belfry made,
Like a benedictory hand was laid.

Few words spoke the seneschal as he turned
To his nearest sentry : " These monks have learned
That stolen fruit is sweetly earned.

" Myself shall punish yon acolyte
Who gathers my garden grapes by night ;
Meanwhile, wait thou till the morning light."

Yet not till the sun was riding high
Did the sentry meet his commander's eye,
Nor then—till the viceroy stood by.

To the lovers of grave formalities
No greeting was ever so fine, I wis,
As this host's and guest's high courtesies !

The seneschal feared, as the wind was west,
A blast from Morena had chilled his rest ?
The viceroy languidly confest

That cares of state, and—he dared to say—
Some fears that the king could not repay
The thoughtful zeal of his host, some way

Had marred his rest. Yet he trusted much
None shared his wakefulness ! Though such
Indeed might be ! If he dared to touch

A theme so fine—the bride, perchance,
Still slept ? At least, they missed her glance
To give this greeting countenance.

Be sure that the seneschal, in turn,
Was deeply bowed with the grave concern
Of the painful news his guest should learn :

"Last night to her father's dying bed
By a priest was the lady summonèd ;
Nor know we yet how well she sped,

"But hope for the best." The grave viceroy
(Though grieved his visit had such alloy)
Must still wish the seneschal great joy

Of a bride so true to her filial trust !
Yet now as the day waxed on, they must
To horse, if they'd 'scape the noonday dust.

"Nay," said the seneschal, "at least,
To mend the news of this funeral priest
Myself shall ride as your escort, east."

The viceroy bowed. Then turned aside
To his nearest follower : "With me ride—
You and Felipe—on either side.

"And list ! Should anything me befall,
Mischance of ambush or musket-ball,
Cleave to his saddle yon seneschal !

"No more." Then gravely in accents clear
Took formal leave of his late good cheer :
Whiles the seneschal whispered a musketeer,

Carelessly stroking his pommel top,
"If from the saddle ye see me drop,
Riddle me quickly yon solemn fop !"

So these, with many a compliment,
Each on his one dark thought intent,
With grave politeness onward went,

Riding high, and in sight of all,
Viceroy, escort, and seneschal,
Under the shade of the Almandral.

Holding their secret, hard and fast,
Silent and grave, they ride at last
Into the dusty travelled Past ;

Even like this they passed away
Two hundred years ago to-day.
What of the lady? Who shall say?

Do the souls of the dying ever yearn
To some favoured spot for the dust's return—
For the homely peace of the family urn?

I know not. Yet did the seneschal,
Chancing in after years to fall
Pierced by a Flemish musket-ball,

Call to his side a trusty friar
And bid him swear, as his last desire,
To bear his corse to San Pedro's choir

At Leon, where 'neath a shield azure
Should his mortal frame find sepulture ;
This much, for the pains Christ did endure.

Be sure that the friar loyally
Fulfilled his trust by land and sea,
Till the spires of Leon silently

Rose through the green of the Almandral,
As if to beckon the seneschal
To his kindred dust 'neath the choir wall.

I wot that the saints on either side
Leaned from their niches open-eyed,
To see the doors of the church swing wide—

That the wounds of the Saviour on either flank
Bled fresh, as the mourners, rank by rank,
Went by with the coffin, clank on clank.

For why? when they raised the marble door
Of the tomb untouched for years before,
The friar swooned on the choir floor ;

For there, in her laces and festal dress,
Lay the dead man's wife, her loveliness
Scarcely changed by her long duress ;

As on the night she had passed away—
Only that near her a dagger lay,
With the written legend, " Por el Rey."

What was their greeting—the groom and bride,
They whom that steel and the years divide?
I know not. Here they lie side by side.

Side by side. Though the king has his way,
Even the dead at last have their day.
Make you the moral. " Por el Rey."

DON DIEGO OF THE SOUTH.

REFECTORY-MISSION SAN GABRIEL.

1869.

“GOOD,” said the Padre, “believe me still,
Don Giovanni, or what you will,—
The type’s eternal ! We knew him here
As Don Diego del Sud. I fear
The story’s no new one. Will you hear ?

One of those spirits you can’t tell why
God has permitted. Therein I
Have the advantage, for I hold
That wolves are sent to the purest fold.
And we save the wolf, if we’d get the lamb.
You’re no believer ! Good ! I am.

Well, for some purpose, I grant you dim,
The Don loved women, and they loved him.
Each thought herself his *last* love ! Worse,
Many believed that they were his *first* !
And such are those creatures, since the Fall,
The very doubt had a charm for all !

You laugh ! You are young—but I—indeed
I have no patience.

To proceed.

You saw, as you passed through the upper town,
 The *Encinal*, where the road goes down
 To San Felipe. There one morn
 They found Diego, his mantle torn,
 And as many stabs through his doublet's band
 As there were wronged husbands—you understand?

'Dying,'—so said the gossips. 'Dead,'
 Was what the friars who found him said.
 Good! *Quien sabe?* Who else should know?—
 It was a hundred years ago.
 There was a funeral. Small indeed—
 Private. What would you?

To proceed.

Scarcely the year had flown. One night
 The *comandante* awoke in fright,—
 Hearing below his casement's bar
 The well-known twang of the Don's guitar—
 And rushed to the window—just to see
 His wife a-swoon on the balcony.

One week later Don Juan Ramirez
 Found his own daughter, the Doña Inez,
 Pale as a ghost, leaning out to hear
 The song of that phantom cavalier.
 Even Alcalde Pedro Blas
 Saw, it was said, through his niece's glass
 The shade of Diego twice repass.

What the gentlemen each confessed
 Heaven and the Church only knows. At best
 The case was a bad one. How to deal
 With Sin as a ghost they couldn't but feel

Was an awful thing. Till a certain Fray
Humbly offered to show the way.

And the way was this : Did I say before
That the Fray was a stranger? No,- Señor?
Strange ! Very strange ! I should have said
That the very week that the Don lay dead
He came among us ! Bread he broke
Silent ; nor ever to one he spoke.
So had he vowed it. Below his brows
His face was hidden. There are such vows.

Strange, are they not? You do not use
Snuff? A bad habit !

Well, the views
Of the Fray were this : that the penance done
By the caballeros was right ; but one
Was due from the *cause*, and that in brief,
Was Donna Dolores Gomez, chief,
And Inez, Sanchicha, Concepcion,
And Carmen. Well, half the girls in town
On his tablets the Friar had written down.

These were to come on a certain day
And ask at the hands of this pious Fray
For absolution. That done, small fear
But the shade of Diego would disappear.

They came, each knelt in her turn and place
To the pious Fray with his hidden face
And voiceless lips, and each again
Took back her soul freed from spot or stain,
Till the Doña Inez, with eyes downcast
And a tear on their fringes, knelt her last.

And then—perhaps that her voice was low
From fear or from shame—the monks said so—
But the Fray leaned forward, when swiftly all
Were thrilled by a scream, and saw her fall
Fainting beside the confessional.

And so was the ghost of Diego laid
As the Fray had said. No more his shade
Was seen at San Gabriel's Mission. Eh?
The girl interests you? I dare say!

'Nothing,' she said, when they brought her to;
'Nothing,—a faintness.' They spake more true
Who said 'twas a stubborn soul. But then
Women are women, and men are men.

So to return. As I said before,
Having got the wolf, by the same high law
We saved the lamb in the wolf's own jaw;
And that's my story. The tale, I fear,
But poorly told. Yet, it strikes me, here
Is stuff for a moral. What's your view?
You smile, Don Pancho; ah! that's like you!"

FRIAR PEDRO'S RIDE.

It was the morning season of the year ;
It was the morning era of the land ;
The watercourses rang full loud and clear ;
Portala's cross stood where Portala's hand
Had planted it when Faith was taught by Fear ;
When Monks and Missions held the sole command
Of all that shore beside the peaceful sea
Where spring-tides beat their long-drawn reveille.

Out of the Mission of San Luis Rey,
All in that brisk, tumultuous spring weather,
Rode Friar Pedro, in a pious way,
With six dragoons in cuirasses of leather,
Each armed alike for either prayer or fray,
Handcuffs and missals they had slung together ;
And as an aid the gospel truth to scatter
Each swung a lasso—*alias* a "riata."

In sooth, that year the harvest had been slack,
The crop of converts scarce worth computation ;
Some souls were lost, whose owners had turned back
To save their bodies frequent flagellation,
And some preferred the songs of birds, alack,
To Latin matins and their souls' salvation,
And thought their own wild whoopings were less dreary
Than Father Pedro's droning *miserere*.

To bring them back to matins and to prime,
To pious works and secular submission,
To prove to them that liberty was crime,
This was in fact the Padre's present mission ;
To get new souls perchance at the same time
And bring them to a "sense of their condition"—
That easy phrase which, in the past and present,
Means making that condition most unpleasant.

He saw the glebe land guiltless of a furrow ;
He saw the wild oats wrestle on the hill ;
He saw the gopher working in his burrow ;
He saw the squirrel scampering at his will ;
He saw all this, and felt no doubt a thorough
And deep conviction of God's goodness ; still
He failed to see that in His glory He
Yet left the humblest of His creatures free.

He saw the flapping crow, whose frequent note
Voiced the monotony of land and sky,
Mocking with graceless wing and rusty coat
His priestly presence as he trotted by.
He would have cursed the bird by bell and rote,
But other game just then was in his eye—
A savage camp, whose occupants preferred
Their heathen darkness to the living Word.

He rang his bell, and at the martial sound
Twelve silver spurs their jingling rowels clashed ;
Six horses sprang across the level ground
And six dragoons in open order dashed ;
Above their heads the lassos circled round ;
In every eye a pious fervour flashed ;
They charged the camp, and in one moment more
They lassoed six and reconverted four.

The Friar saw the conflict from a knoll,
And sang *Laus Deo*, and cheered on his men :
“ Well thrown, Bautista,—that’s another soul !
After him, Gomez,—try it once again !
This way, Felipe ! there the heathen stole ;
Bones of St. Francis ! surely that makes *ten* !
Te deum laudamus,—but they’re very wild ;
Non nobis dominus,—all right, my child.”

When at that moment—as the story goes—
A certain squaw, who had her foes eluded,
Ran past the Friar,—just before his nose.
He stared a moment, and in silence brooded,
Then in his breast a pious frenzy rose
And every other prudent thought excluded ;
He caught a lasso, and dashed in a canter
After that Occidental Atalanta.

High o’er his head he swirled the dreadful noose,
But as the practice was quite unfamiliar,
His first cast tore Felipe’s captive loose,
And almost choked Tiburcio Camilla,
And might have interfered with that brave youth’s
Ability to gorge the tough *tortilla* ;
But all things come by practice, and at last
His flying slip-knot caught the maiden fast.

Then rose above the plain a mingled yell
Of rage and triumph,—a demoniac whoop ;
The Padre heard it like a passing knell,
And would have loosened his unchristian loop ;
But the tough raw-hide held the captive well,
And held, alas, too well the captor-dupe ;
For with one bound the savage fled amain,
Dragging horse, friar, down the lonely plain.

Down the *arroyo*, out across the mead,
By heath and hollow, sped the flying maid,
Dragging behind her still the panting steed
And helpless friar, who in vain essayed
To cut the lasso or to check his speed.
He felt himself beyond all human aid,
And trusted to the saints,—and for that matter
To some weak spot in Felipe's *riata*.

Alas ! the lasso had been duly blessed,
And, like baptism, held the flying wretch.
A doctrine that the priest had oft expressed,—
Which, like the lasso, might be made to stretch
But would not break,—so neither could divest
Themselves of it, but like some awful *fetch*,
The holy friar had to recognize
His fate prophetic in that heathen guise.

He saw the glebe land guiltless of a furrow ;
He saw the wild oats wrestle on the hill ;
He saw the gopher standing in his burrow ;
He saw the squirrel scampering at his will ;
He saw all this, and felt no doubt how thorough
The contrast was to his condition ; still
The squaw kept onward to the sea, till night
And the cold sea-fog hid them both from sight.

The morning came above the serried coast,
Lighting the snow-peaks with its beacon-fires,
Driving before it all the fleet-winged host
Of chattering birds above the Mission spires,
Filling the land with light and joy,—but most
The savage woods with all their leafy lyres ;
In pearly tints, and opal flame and fire
The morning came,—but not the holy Friar.

Weeks passed away. In vain the Fathers sought
Some trace or token that might tell his story.
Some thought him dead, or like Elijah caught
Up to the heavens in a blaze of glory.
In this surmise some miracles were wrought
On his account, and souls in purgatory
Were thought to profit from his intercession—
In brief, his absence made a "deep impression."

A twelvemonth passed ; the welcome spring once more
Made green the hills beside the white-faced Mission,
Spread her bright daïs by the western shore,
And sat enthroned,—a most resplendent vision.
The heathen converts thronged the chapel-door
At morning mass ; when, says the old tradition,
A frightful whoop throughout the church resounded,
And to their feet the congregation bounded.

A tramp of hoofs upon the beaten course—
Then came a sight that made the bravest quail :
A phantom friar, on a spectre horse,
Dragged by a creature decked with horns and tail.
By the lone Mission, with the whirlwind's force,
They madly swept, and left a sulphurous trail—
And that was all—enough to tell the story
And leave unblessed those souls in purgatory.

And ever after, on that fatal day
That Friar Pedro rode abroad lassoing,
A ghostly couple came and went away
With savage whoop and heathenish hallooing,
Which brought discredit on San Luis Rey,
And proved the Mission's ruin and undoing ;
For ere ten years had passed, the squaw and Friar
Performed to empty walls and fallen spire.

The Mission is no more ; upon its walls

The golden lizards slip, or breathless pause,
Still as the sunshine brokenly that falls

Through crannied roof and spider-webs of gauze :
No more the bell its solemn warning calls,—

A holier silence thrills and overawes ;
And the sharp lights and shadows of To-Day
Outline the Mission of San Luis Rey.

AT THE HACIENDA.

KNOW I not whom thou mayst be

Carved upon this olive tree,—

“Manuela of La Torre,”

For, around on broken walls

Summer sun and Spring rain falls,

And in vain the low wind calls

“Manuela of La Torre.”

Of that song no words remain

But the musical refrain:

“Manuela of La Torre.”

Yet at night when winds are still,

Tinkles on the distant hill

A guitar, and words that thrill

Tell to me the old, old story,—

Old when first thy charms were sung,

Old when these old walls were young,

“Manuela of La Torre,”

TRUTHFUL JAMES TO THE EDITOR.

IN THE MODOC WAR.

1873.

WHICH it is not my style
To produce needless pain
By statements that rile,
Or that go 'gin the grain,
But here's Captain Jack still a livin', and Nye has no skelp
on his brain !

On that Caucasian head
There is no crown of hair.
It has gone, it has fled !
And Echo sez " where ? "
And I asks, " Is this Nation a White Man's, and is generally
things on the square ? "

The was known in the camp
As " Nye's other squaw,"
And folks of that stamp
Hez no rights in the Law,
But is treacherous, sinful, and slimy, as Nye might hev well
known before

But she said that she knew
Where the Injins was hid,
And the statement was true,
For it seemed that she did ;

Since she led William where he was covered by seventeen
Modocs, and — slid !

Then they reached for his hair ;
But Nye sez, “ By the Law
Of Nations, forbear !

I surrenders, — no more :

And I looks to be treated, you hear me ? — as a pris’ner, a
pris’ner of war !”

But Captain Jack rose
And he sez, “ It’s too thin.
Such statements as those
It’s too late to begin.

There’s a *Modoc indictment* agin you, O Pale-face, and you’re
goin’ in !

“ You stole Schonchin’s squaw
In the year ’sixty-two ;
It was in ’sixty-four

That Long Jack you went through,

And you burned Nasty Jim’s rancheria and his wives and his
papposes too.

“ This gun in my hand
Was sold me by you
’Gainst the law of the land,
And I grieves it is true ! ”

And he buried his face in his blanket and wept as he hid it
from view.

“ But you’re tried and condemned,
And skelping’s your doom,”
And he paused and he hemmed,—
But why this resume?

He was skelped ’gainst the custom of Nations, and cut off
like a rose in its bloom.

So I asks without guile,
And I trusts not in vain,
If this is the style
That is going to obtain,—
If here’s Captain Jack still a-livin’, and Nye with no skelp
on his brain?

“THE BABES IN THE WOOD.”

BIG PINE FLAT.

1871.

“SOMETHING characteristic,” eh !

Humph ! I reckon you mean by that
Something that happened in our way.

Here at the crossin’ of Big Pine Flat.
Times aren’t now as they used to be

When gold was flush and the boys were frisky,
And a man would pull out his battery
For anything, — may be the price of whisky.

Nothing of that sort ; eh ! That’s strange,

Why, I thought you might be diverted,
Hearing how Jones of the Red Rock Range,
Drewed his “Hints to the Unconverted.”

And saying, “Where will you have it?” shot
Cherokee Bob at the last Debating !

What was the question ? I forgot, —

But Jones didn’t like Bob’s way of stating.

Nothing of that kind, eh ? You mean

Something milder ? Let’s see. O, Joe !

Tell to the stranger that little scene

Out of the “Babes in the Woods.” You know

“THE BABES IN THE WOODS.”

“Babes” was the name we gave ’em, sir,
Two lean lads in their teens, and greener
Than even the belt of spruce and fir
Where they built their nest, and each day grew leaner.

No one knew where they came from. None
Cared to know if they had a mother.
Runaway schoolboys, maybe. One
Tall and dark as a spruce ; the other
Blue and gold in the eyes and hair,
Soft and low in his speech, but rarely
Talking with us ; and we didn’t care
To get at their secret at all unfairly.

For they were so quiet, so sad and shy,
Content to trust each other solely,
That somehow we’d always shut one eye
And never seem to observe them wholly
As they passed to their work. ’Twas a worn-out claim
And it paid them grub. They could live without it,
For the boys had a way of leaving game
In their tents, and forgetting all about it.

Yet no one asked for their secret. Dumb
It lay in their big eyes’ heavy hollows.
It was understood that no one should come
To their tent unawares, save the bees and the swallows.
So they lived alone. Until one warm night
I was sitting here at the tent-door so, sir,
When out of the sunset’s rosy light
Up rode the sheriff of Mariposa.

I knew at once there was something wrong,
For his hand and his voice shook just a little,
And there isn’t much you can fetch along
To make the sinews of Jack Hill brittle.

“Go warn the Babes !” he whispered hoarse ;
 “Tell them I’m coming, — to get and scurry,
 For I’ve got a story that’s bad, and worse,
 I’ve got a warrant ; G—d d—n it, hurry !”

Too late ! they had seen him cross the hill ;
 I ran to their tent and found them lying
 Dead in each other’s arms, and still
 Clasping the drug they had taken flying.
 And there lay their secret, cold and bare,
 Their life, their trial, the old, old story !
 For the sweet blue eyes and the golden hair,
 Was a *woman’s* shame and a *woman’s* glory.

“Who were they ?” Ask no more, or ask
 The sun that visits their grave so lightly ;
 Ask of the whispering reeds, or task
 The mourning crickets that chirrup nightly.
 All of their life but its love forgot,
 Everything tender and soft and mystic.
 These are our “Babes in the Woods” ; you’ve got,
 Well — human nature ! — that’s characteristic

AFTER THE ACCIDENT.

MOUTH OF THE SHAFT.

WHAT I want is my husband, sir, —
And if you're a man, sir,
 You'll give me an answer, —
Where is my Joe?

Penrhyn, sir, Joe, —
 Caernarvonshire.
Six months ago
 Since we came here —
Eh? — Ah, you know!

Well, I *am* quiet
 And still.
But I must stand here,
 And will!
Please — I'll be strong —
 If you'll just let me wait
 Inside o' that gate
Till the news comes along.

 “Negligence” —
That was the cause; —
 Butchery! —
Are there no laws, —
 Laws to protect such as we?

Well, then ! —

I won't raise my voice.

There men !

I won't make no noise.

Only you just let me be.

Four, only four — did he say —

Saved ! and the other ones ? — Eh ?

Why do they call ?

Why are they all

Looking and coming this way !

What's that ? — a message ?

I'll take it.

I know his wife, sir,

I'll break it.

“ Foreman ! ”

Ay, ay !

“ Out by and by, ” —

“ Just saved his life. ”

“ Say to his wife

Soon he'll be free, ”

Will I ? — God bless you,

It's *me* !

THE GHOST THAT JIM SAW.

WHY, as to that, said the engineer,
Ghosts ain't things we are apt to fear,
Spirits don't fool with levers much,
And throttle-valves don't take to such ;

And as for Jim, —

What happened to him

Was one half fact and t' other half whim !

Running one night on the line, he saw
A house — as plain as the moral law —
Just by the moonlit bank, and thence
Came a drunken man with no more sense

Than to drop on the rail,

Flat as a flail,

As Jim drove by with the midnight mail.

Down went the patents. Steam reversed,
Too late ! for there came a " thud." Jim cursed,
As the fireman, there in the cab with him,
Kinder stared in the face of Jim,

And says, " What now ? "

Says Jim, " What now !

I've just run over a man, — that's how ! "

The fireman stared at Jim. They ran
Back, but they never found house nor man, —
Nary a shadow within a mile.
Jim turned pale, but he tried to smile.

Then on he tore,
Ten mile or more,
In quicker time than he'd made afore.

Would you believe it ! the very next night
Up rose that house in the moonlight white,
Out comes the chap and drops as before,
Down goes the brake and the rest encore,
And so, in fact,
Each night that act
Occurred, till folks swore Jim was cracked.

Humph ! let me see ; it's a year now, 'most,
That I met Jim, East, and says, "How's your ghost?"
"Gone," says Jim ; "and more, it's plain
That ghost don't trouble me again.

I thought I shook
That ghost when I took
A place on an Eastern line, — but look !

"What should I meet, the first trip out,
But the very house we talked about,
And the selfsame man ! 'Well,' says I, 'I guess
It's time to stop this yer foolishness' ;

So I crammed on steam,
When there came a scream
From my fireman, — that jest broke my dream.

"'You've killed somebody !' Says I, 'Not much,
I've been thar often, and thar ain't no such,
And now I'll prove it !' Back we ran,
And, — darn my skin ! — but thar *was* a man
On the rail, dead,
Smashed in the head, —
Now I call that meanness !" That's all Jim said

MISS BLANCHE SAYS.

AND you are the poet, and so you want
Something — what is it? — a theme, a fancy?
Something or other the muse won't grant
In your old poetical necromancy;
Why, one half your poets — you can't deny —
Don't know the muse when you chance to meet her,
But sit in your attics and mope and sigh
For a faineant goddess to drop from the sky,
When flesh and blood may be standing by
Quite at your service, should you but greet her.

What if I told you my own romance?
Women are poets, if you so take them,
One third poet, — the rest what chance
Of man and marriage may choose to make them.
Give me ten minutes before you go, —
Here at the window we'll sit together,
Watching the currents that ebb and flow;
Watching the world as it drifts below
Up to the hot avenue's dusty glow.
Isn't it pleasant, — this bright June weather?

Well, it was after the war broke out,
And I was a school-girl fresh from Paris:
Papa had contracts and roamed about,
And I — did nothing — for I was an heiress.

Picked some lint, now I think ; perhaps
Knitted some stockings — a dozen nearly ;
Havelocks made for the soldiers' caps ;
Stood at fair-tables and peddled traps
Quite at a profit. The shoulder-straps
Thought I was pretty. Ah, thank you, really

Still, it was stupid. Ratatat-tat !
Those were the sounds of that battle summer,
Till the earth seemed a parchment round and flat,
And every footfall the tap of a drummer ;
And, day by day, down the avenue went
Cavalry, Infantry, all together,
Till my pitying angel one day sent
My fate in the shape of a regiment
That halted, just as the day was spent,
Here at our door in the bright June weather.

None of your dandy warriors they :
Men from the West, but where, I know not ;
Haggard and travel-stained, worn and gray,
With never a ribbon or lace or bow-knot :
And I opened the window, and leaning there,
I felt in their presence the free winds blowing ;
My neck and shoulders and arms were bare, —
I did not dream they might think me fair,
But I had some flowers that night in my hair,
And here, on my bosom, a red rose glowing.

And I looked from the window along the line,
Dusty and dirty and grim and solemn,
Till an eye like a bayonet-flash met mine
And a dark face blazed from the darkening column,

And a quick flame leaped to my eyes and hair
Till cheeks and shoulders burned all together,
And the next I found myself standing there
With my eyelids wet and my cheeks less fair,
And the rose from my bosom tossed high in air
Like a blood-drop falling on plume and feather.

Then I drew back quickly : there came a cheer,
A rush of figures, a noise and tussle,
And then it was over, and high and clear,
My red rose bloomed on his gun's black muzzle.
Then far in the darkness a sharp voice cried,
And slowly, and steadily, all together,
Shoulder to shoulder, and side to side,
Rising and falling, and swaying wide,
But bearing above them the rose, my pride,
They marched away in the twilight weather.

And I leaned from my window and watched my rose,
Tossed on the waves of the surging column,
Warmed from above in the sunset glows,
Borne from below by an impulse solemn.
Then I shut the window. I heard no more
Of my soldier friend, my flower neither,
But lived my life as I did before ;
I did not go as nurse to the war, —
Sick folks to me are a dreadful bore, —
So I didn't go to the hospital, either.

You smile, O poet, and what do you ?

You lean from your window, and watch life's column
Trampling and struggling through dust and dew,
Filled with its purposes grave and solemn ;

And an act, a gesture, a face, — who knows? —
Touches your fancy to thrill and haunt you,
And you pluck from your bosom the verse that grows,
And down it flies like my red, red rose,
And you sit and dream as away it goes,
And think that your duty is done, — now don't you?

I know your answer. I'm not yet through.

Look at this photograph—"In the Trenches":
That dead man in the coat of blue
Holds a withered rose in his hand. That clenches
Nothing! Except that the sun paints true,
And a woman is sometimes prophetic-minded.
And that's my romance. And, poet, you
Take it and mould it to suit your view;
And who knows but you may find it too
Come back to your heart once more as mine did.

HALF AN HOUR BEFORE SUPPER.

“So she’s here, your unknown Dulcinea,—the lady you met
on the train,

And you really believe she would know you if you were to
meet her again?”

“Of course,” he replied, “she would know me ; there never
was womankind yet

Forgot the effect she inspired ; she excuses, but does not
forget.”

“Then you told her your love?” asked the elder ; the
younger looked up with a smile,

“I sat by her side half an hour,—what else was I doing the
while !

“What, sit by the side of a woman as fair as the sun in the
sky,

And look somewhere else lest the dazzle flash back from your
own to her eye ?

“No, I hold that the speech of the tongue be as frank and as
bold as the look,

And I held up herself to herself,—that was more than she
got from her book.”

“Young blood !” laughed the elder ; “no doubt you are
voicing the mode of To-day ;

But then we old fogies, at least, gave the lady some chance
for delay.

"There's my wife—(you must know)—we first met on the journey from Florence to Rome :

It took me three weeks to discover who was she and where was her home ;

" Three more to be duly presented ; three more ere I saw her again ;

And a year ere my romance *began* where yours ended that day on the train."

" Oh, that was the style of the stage-coach ; we travel to-day by express ;

Forty miles to the hour," he answered, " won't admit of a passion that's less."

" But what if you make a mistake ?" quoth the elder. The younger half sighed.

" What happens when signals are wrong or switches misplaced ?" he replied.

" Very well, I must bow to your wisdom," the elder returned, " but submit

Your chances of winning this woman your boldness has bettered no whit.

" Why, you do not, at best, know her name. And what if I try your ideal

" With something if not quite so fair, at least more *en règle* and real ?

" Let me find you a partner. Nay, come, I insist—you shall follow—this way.

My dear, will you not add your grace to entreat Mr. Rapid to stay ?

" My wife, Mr. Rapid—Eh, what ! Why, he's gone,—yet he said he would come ;

How rude ! I don't wonder, my dear, you are properly crimson and dumb ! "

WHAT THE CHIMNEY SANG.

OVER the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew ;
And the Woman stopped, as her babe she tossed,
And thought of the one she had long since lost,
And said, as her tear-drops back she forced,
“ I hate the wind in the chimney.”

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew ;
And the Children said, as they closer drew.
“ ’Tis some witch that is cleaving the black night
through,—
’Tis a fairy trumpet that just then blew,
And we fear the wind in the chimney.”

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew ;
And the Man, as he sat on his hearth below,
Said to himself, “ It will surely snow,
And fuel is dear, and wages low,
And I’ll stop the leak in the chimney.”

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew ;
But the Poet listened and smiled, for he
Was Man, and Woman, and Child, all three,
And he said, “ It is God’s own harmony,
This wind that sings in the chimney.”

GUILD'S SIGNAL.

WILLIAM GUILD was engineer of the train which on the 19th of April plunged into Meadow Brook, on the line of the Stonington and Providence Railroad. It was his custom, as often as he passed his home, to whistle an "All's well" to his wife. He was found, after the disaster dead, with his hand on the throttle-valve of his engine.

Two low whistles, quaint and clear,
That was the signal the engineer—
That was the signal that Guild, 'tis said—
Gave to his wife at Providence.
As through the sleeping town, and thence
Out in the night,
On to the light,
Down past the farms, lying white, he sped !

As a husband's greeting, scant, no doubt,
Yet to the woman looking out,
Watching and waiting, no serenade,
Love-song, or midnight roundelay,
Said what that whistle seemed to say :
"To my trust true,
So love to you !
Working or waiting, good-night !" it said.

Brisk young bagmen, tourists fine,
Old commuters along the line,

Brakemen and porters glanced ahead,
Smiled as the signal, sharp, intense,
Pierced through the shadows of Providence,—

“Nothing amiss—

Nothing!—it is

Only Guild calling his wife,” they said.

Summer and Winter, the old refrain,
Rang o'er the billows of ripening grain,

Pierced through the budding boughs o'erhead,
Flew down the track when the red leaves burned
Like living coals from the engine spurned ;

Sang as it flew :

“To our trust true,

First of all, duty ! Good night !” it said.

And then, one night, it was heard no more
From Stonington over Rhode Island shore,

And the folk in Providence smiled and said,
As they turned in their beds, “The engineer
Has once forgotten his midnight cheer.”

One only knew,

To his trust true,

Guild lay under his engine, dead.

CALDWELL OF SPRINGFIELD.

NEW JERSEY.

1780.

HERE'S the spot. Look around you. Above on the height
Lay the Hessians encamped. By that church on the right
Stood the gaunt Jersey farmers. And here ran a wall,—
You may dig anywhere and you'll turn up a ball.
Nothing more. Grasses spring, waters run, flowers blow,
Pretty much as they did ninety-three years ago.

Nothing more, did I say? Stay one moment ; you've heard
Of Caldwell, the parson, who once preached the word
Down at Springfield? What, No? Come — that's bad, why
he had

All the Jerseys aflame ! And they gave him the name
Of the “ rebel high-priest.” He stuck in their gorge,
For he loved the Lord God,— and he hated King George !

He had cause, you might say ! When the Hessians that day
Marched up with Knyphausen they stopped on their way
At the “ Farms,” where his wife, with a child in her arms,
Sat alone in the house. How it happened none knew
But God — and that one of the hireling crew
Who fired the shot ! Enough ! — there she lay,
And Caldwell, the chaplain her husband, away !

Did he bear it — what way ? Think of him as you stand
By the old church to-day ; — think of him and that band

Of militant ploughboys ! See the smoke and the heat
Of that reckless advance,— of that straggling retreat !
Keep the ghost of that wife, foully slain, in your view,—
And what could you, what should you, what would *you* do ?

Why, just what *he* did ! They were left in the lurch
For the want of more wadding. He ran to the church,
Broke the door, stripped the pews, and dashed out in the
road

With his arms full of hymn-books, and threw down his load
At their feet ! Then above all the shouting and shots,
Rang his voice,—“ Put Watts into 'em,— Boys, give 'em
Watts ! ”

And they did. That is all. Grasses spring, flowers blow
Pretty much as they did ninety-three years ago.
You may dig anywhere and you'll turn up a ball,—
But not always a hero like this,— and that's all-

POEM.

DELIVERED ON THE FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
CALIFORNIA'S ADMISSION INTO THE UNION.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1864.

WE meet in peace, though from our native East
The sun that sparkles on our birthday feast
Glanced as he rose in fields whose dewes were red
With darker tints than those Aurora spread ;
Though shorn his rays,—his welcome disk concealed
In the dim smoke that veiled each battle-field,
Still striving upward, in meridian pride,
He climbed the walls that East and West divide,—
Saw his bright face flashed back from golden sand,
And sapphire seas that lave the Western land.

Strange was the contrast that such scenes disclose
From his high vantage o'er eternal snows :
There War's alarm the brazen trumpet rings,—
Here his love-song the mailed cicada sings ;
There bayonets glitter through the forest glades,—
Here yellow cornfields stack their peaceful blades ;
There the deep trench where Valour finds a grave,—
Here he long ditch that curbs the peaceful wave ;
There the bold sapper with his lighted train,—
Here the dark tunnel and its stores of gain ;
Here the full harvest and the wain's advance,—
There the Grim Reaper and the ambulance.

With scenes so adverse, what mysterious bond
Links our fair fortunes to the shores beyond?
Why come we here,—last of a scattered fold,—
To pour new metal in the broken mould?
To yield our tribute, stamped with Cæsar's face,
To Cæsar, stricken in the market-place?

Ah, Love of Country is the secret tie
That joins these contrasts 'neath one arching sky;
Though brighter paths our peaceful steps explore,—
We meet together at the Nation's door.
War winds her horn, and giant cliffs go down
Like the high walls that girt the sacred town,
And bares the pathway to her throbbing heart,
From clustered village and from crowded mart.

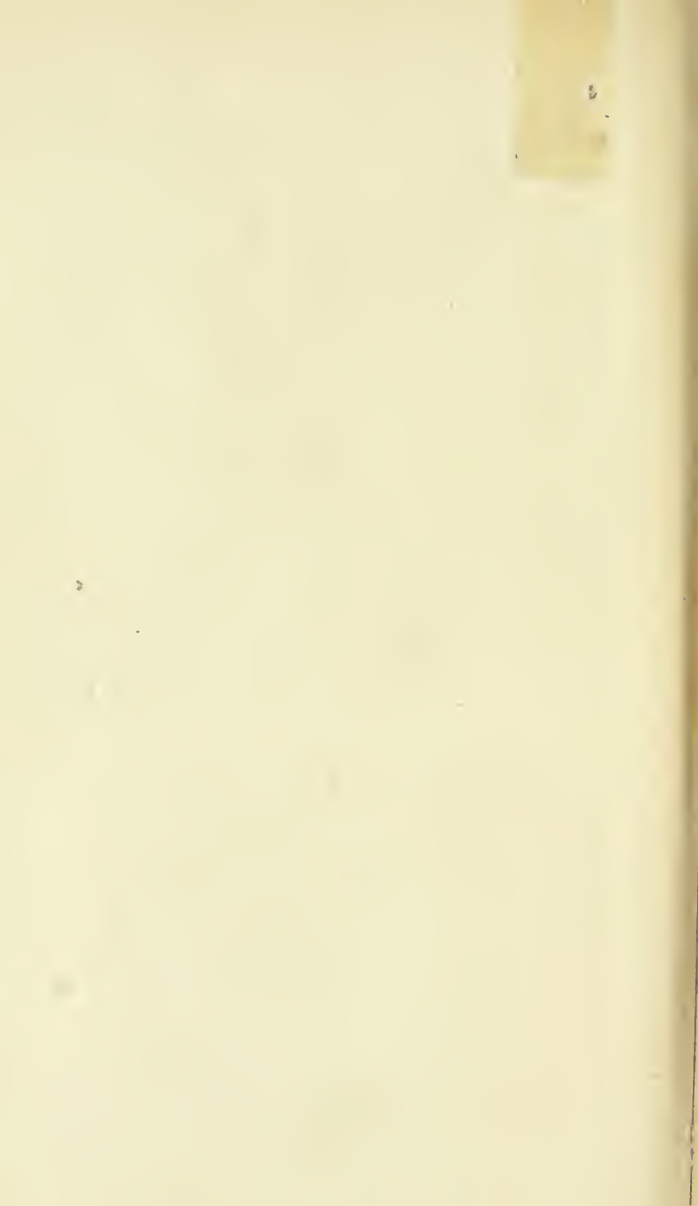
Part of God's providence it was to found
A nation's bulwark on this chosen ground,—
Not Jesuit's zeal nor Pioneer's unrest
Planted these pickets in the distant West;
But He who first the Nation's fate forecast
Placed here his fountains sealed for ages past,
Rock-ribbed and guarded till the coming time
Should fit the people for their work sublime;
When a new Moses with his rod of steel
Smote the tall cliffs with one wide-ringing peal,
And the old miracle in record told
To the new nation was revealed in Gold.

Judge not too idly that our toils are mean,
Though no new levies marshal on our green;
Nor deem too rashly that our gains are small,
Weighed with the prizes for which heroes fall.
See, where thick vapour wreathes the battle-line
There Mercy follows with her oil and wine;

Or where brown Labour with its peaceful charm
Stiffens the sinews of the Nation's arm,
What nerves its hands to strike a deadlier blow,
And hurl its legions on the distant foe?
Lo ! for each town now rising o'er our State
See the foe's hamlet waste and desolate,
While each new factory trains a chimney tall,
Like a new mortar, on the foeman's wall.

For this, O brothers, swings the fruitful vine,
Spread our broad pastures with their countless line ;
For this o'erhead the arching vault springs clear,
Sunlit and cloudless for one half the year ;
For this no snow-flake, e'er so lightly pressed,
Chills the warm impulse of our mother's breast.
Quick to reply, from meadows brown and sere,
She thrills responsive to Spring's earliest tear ;
Breaks into blossom, flings her loveliest rose
Ere the white crocus mounts Atlantic snows ;
And the example of her liberal creed
Teaches the lesson that to-day we need.

Thus ours the lot with peaceful, generous hand
To spread our bounty o'er the suffering land ;
As the deep cleft in Mariposa's wall
Hurls a vast river splintering in its fall,—
Though the wrapt soul who stands in awe below
Sees but the arching of the promised bow—
Lo ! the far streamlet drinks its dew unseen,
And the whole valley wakes a brighter green.







PS Clemens, Samuel Langhorne
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